



CULTURAL STRATEGIST DOWNTOWN ALLEYWAYS FAQ



Last updated August 26, 2026

1. Can an applicant submit an application for both the Cathedral Square and Downtown Alleyways Cultural Strategist positions?

*While one applicant can apply for both positions, applications should look very different as they are functionally different jobs. If you apply for both with an identical (or nearly identical) application, both will be considered, but it is not advised. We recommend you apply for the position that appeals to you the most, keeping in mind the location, the project stage, and the core skillsets required. If you can't decide, please submit **highly different** applications that demonstrate that you understand the difference between these two calls.*

2. What are the key skillsets for the Cultural Strategist for the Downtown Alleyways?

Exploring an aesthetic and utilitarian redesign of two Downtown Alleyways (Clemence St and Middle St) is a new multiyear project with the City of Providence's Planning Department. They are in the process of hiring an engineering team who will likely join the project just after the Cultural Strategist.

Because this project is just beginning, the Cultural Strategist for the Downtown Alleyways is likely to do a good deal of early-stage community engagement and in some cases may be the first person to connect with business owners or users of the alleyways. We also imagine they will need to be more adept in temporary visual provocations, offerings, and tests, created in collaboration with the engineering team.

Due to the nature of the site and the work we anticipate, we seek a Cultural Strategist (or team) who is comfortable beginning a project and can potentially co-create and produce low-lift programming (eg, noontime alleyway concerts) and temporary visual art (eg, experiments in seating) while considering the spatial relationship of the various activities and the active work the engineers are piloting which will likely relate to lighting and larger problem-solving of cars and dumpsters.

3. How are these positions funded?



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Both Cultural Strategist positions are funded through an allocation from the City's CIP (Capital Improvement Project) funding. It lives outside of the General Fund budget and is not a grant. This funding can span fiscal years and is bond money used for the City's long-term building and construction projects. This specific allocation was allocated to Art, Culture and Tourism to support public art. The Planning Department has separate CIP funding dedicated to both projects.

4. How will the contract be structured?

*The contract will be organized in two 6-month phases: Field Study and Programming Study. At the end of the first six months, the Cultural Strategist(s) will meet with ACT and Planning to review the first six months and the plan for the next six months. At this time, if either party feels that the proposed work will not be successful or that the first six months did not elicit enough data to be meaningfully useful, the contract can be terminated rather than move ahead. While we recognize the inherent risk in all projects that deal with change, we do not want to jeopardize community trust in the long-term outcomes or artistic thinking. **A decision to cut the contract after six months would not be a failed outcome.***

5. How is the \$50,000 contract structured?

Applicants should consider the \$50k the total contract, which includes the Cultural Strategist's fee, materials, and any subcontractors for the year. It is up to the Cultural Strategist to budget this funding in a way that works for your project. The City of Providence will work with the finalists to determine a funding timeline but will not act as a fiscal agent for the Cultural Strategist (ie, pay their subcontractors).

6. Can the Cultural Strategist solicit additional funding from corporate sponsorship, specifically the Downtown businesses?

Because this project is so new, we generally discourage this idea as an overall plan before getting to know the players. If this idea emerges organically after the Field Work is well underway and it seems additional funding would be useful and available for meaningful work that gives everyone a larger stake in the outcomes, we would not be opposed.



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It's important to remember that with the Downtown Alleyways specifically the Cultural Strategist will be working alongside an engineering team that has access to a more substantial budget. The Cultural Strategist for the Downtown Alleyways should consider their budget as a useful tool for low-lift work, knowing that the engineers will be trying bigger projects (ie, lighting) in tandem with your work.

7. Can the Cultural Strategist be outside of Providence? Is this hybrid work?

Though certainly some of this work will happen asynchronously on-line, the most significant work will be on-the-ground at Cathedral Square with the Cultural Strategist determining their own schedule and reporting back, inviting and otherwise including various members of the team (ACT, Planning, HHS, Architects, etc) as they require. Though we can consider proposals from applicants who don't currently live in Providence, being able to be responsive and on-site at all times of day and days of the week is a crucial aspect of this work.