



SHINE 2026: Call for Student Art Submissions

America at 250 – Local Stories, Shared Futures

The City of Newton invites Newton middle and high school students to participate in the **2026 SHINE public art initiative**. This program offers student artists the opportunity to contribute to the city's creative landscape by painting mural boards that will be displayed as temporary public art installations throughout Newton.

SHINE celebrates the creativity and perspectives of Newton's youth by giving them a public platform on which to shine.

2026 Theme: America at 250 – Local Stories, Shared Futures

In 2026, the United States marks the **250th anniversary of its founding**. This milestone invites us to reflect not only on the past, but also on who we are today and what kind of future we want to build.

This year's SHINE theme is an exploration of how **history, community, and identity connect across time** — right here in Newton.

You might consider:

- How ideas like **freedom, fairness, community, and participation** show up in everyday life
- **Local stories** that shape Newton's identity
- How Newton — and the country — has **changed over time**
- What you hope the **next 250 years** might look like

You do **not** need to paint historical scenes. We encourage you to express these ideas through **symbols, color, people, places, or abstract designs** that feel meaningful to you.

This project is about **your voice, your perspective, and your vision**.

Project Overview

Selected artists will paint an **8 ft long (horizontal) × 4 foot high (vertical) mural board** with a design that reflects their personal interpretation of the theme **America at 250 – Local Stories, Shared Futures**.

Plywood panels will be provided primed and ready to paint on. Artists are responsible for supplying all other materials.

Completed mural boards will be installed by the City of Newton in various parks and public spaces throughout the community as temporary public art installations, remaining on view through approximately Labor Day 2026.

Project Details

Painting Location: Lakeside Studio at the Crystal Lake Bathhouse

Painting Period: April 13 – May 8, 2026

Unveiling: Newton SpringFest, May 16, 2026 at Newton North High School

Promotion: Artists' work will be featured in local arts and news media connected to Newton SpringFest, Newton Parks & Recreation and the 250th Anniversary celebrations.

Compensation: \$200 stipend (includes cost of materials)

Project Timeline

Application Opens: February 9, 2026

Deadline to Apply: February 27, 2026

Selected Artists Notified: March 9, 2026

Orientation Meeting: March 19, 2026

Sketches Due: March 27, 2026

(Sketches can be submitted earlier and will be reviewed upon receipt)

Sketch Review & Final Approval: March 30 – April 9, 2026

Painting Period: April 13 – May 8, 2026

(April vacation is April 20–24)

Unveiling at Newton SpringFest: Saturday, May 16, 2026

Installation Period: Week of May 18, 2026

Public Display Period: until Labor Day 2026

Eligibility

Open to all current middle school and high school students who live or attend school in Newton. Applications from individuals or teams of up to three students are welcome.

Artist & Parent/Guardian Expectations

To ensure a safe and successful experience:

- Parent/guardian contact information must be included in the application
- Selected artists are expected to check email daily, as this is our primary form of communication
- A parent, guardian, or designated adult (age 18+) must be present at the Crystal Lake Bathhouse whenever a student artist is painting. This is required for participation in the project
 - *In past SHINE projects, supervision has often become a collaborative effort. As families and students get to know one another, one adult has frequently supervised multiple student artists during shared painting sessions. This means not every student needs to have their own adult present at all times, as long as a responsible adult is on site and aware of the students they are supervising.*
- Artists must sign up for painting times using a shared scheduling system and follow the outlined guidelines
- Parents/guardians and artists must sign an agreement form confirming understanding of these expectations

Selection Criteria

Submissions will be reviewed by the Newton Community Events & Programs team. Artists will be selected based on:

- Creativity and originality
- Alignment to the project theme
- Artistic effort and clarity of idea
- Feasibility of the proposed design

How to Apply

1. Complete the online application form [HERE](#)
2. Email a sketch of your mural idea to events@newtonma.gov
3. Include up to **three samples** of recent artwork (any medium)

Questions?

Write to events@newtonma.gov or call our office at **617-796-1540**

Why Participate?

- Gain hands-on experience creating public art
- See your work displayed in a prominent public space
- Be part of Newton's participation in a historic national milestone
- Share your voice and perspective with the community
- Have fun and be part of a creative, supportive experience
- Meet other student artists and make new friends
- Build or strengthen your artistic portfolio with large-scale public artwork

**Your story is part of history, too.
Submit your application and help shape SHINE 2026.**