



Your Guide to Painting a Utility Box

Share your vision. Become part of a vibrant Downtown El Cajon.

You're invited

to contribute to the growing collection of public art through participating in UArt: Downtown El Cajon's Utility Art Box Program. Find out what it means to share your creativity to beautify the streetscape of Downtown El Cajon and transform a common utility box into a work of art for all to enjoy.

About UArt: Downtown El Cajon's Utility Art Box Program

[I Want to Participate in UArt](#)

[Artist Benefits](#)

[Policies and Guidelines](#)

[Instructions for Painting](#)

[UArt FAQs](#)

[UArt Application and Template](#)

About UArt

We BELIEVE communities come alive with Arts and Culture



"El Cajon Natives" by Lydia Puentes Phillips depicts four species of butterflies unique to El Cajon.

UArt is a community driven effort to beautify Downtown El Cajon by transforming common utility boxes into distinctive works of art. Sponsored by the El Cajon Redevelopment Agency and coordinated by the El Cajon CDC, UArt celebrates local artwork and encourages regional artists to share their creativity with everyone in Downtown El Cajon. Vibrant public art helps deter unsightly nuisance from our community and creates inviting spaces for residents and visitors alike.

As a community based non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, the El Cajon CDC is looking for artistic individuals with an appreciation for El Cajon's past and future to participate in this meaningful project. Take a look inside: this guide will help you navigate a utility box project from start to finish. Get excited to be a part of the beautiful Downtown El Cajon landscape for years to come!



I Want to Participate in UArt

To participate in this worthwhile activity, submit the materials listed below to the El Cajon CDC by July 30, 2010. A copy of the application and template is available at the end of this guide. See "UArt FAQs" on page 5 for design ideas.

- **A completed application**
Please be sure to fill out all portions to the best of your ability.
- **A completed artist bio attached to your application**
- **A color rendering of your proposed design for the artwork using the template provided**
Artwork must be submitted on the template provided as an accurate depiction of your painting.
- **Slides, prints, and/or promotional materials of your previous artwork (optional)**
- **A self-addressed stamped envelope if you would like the samples of your previous work returned to you (optional)**

Materials may be submitted by mail or electronically by July 30, 2010:

For mail send to:
El Cajon Community Development Corporation
Attn: Rebecca Reyes
131 East Main Street, Suite 201
El Cajon, CA 92020

For e-mail send to:
Rebecca Reyes at Rebecca@downtownelcajon.com
*Please submit images in jpg format.

Artist Benefits

UArt artists reap fun benefits and free exposure in Downtown El Cajon. In some cases, artists have even been commissioned by local businesses to paint murals on their buildings! Some advantages include:

- \$125 artist stipend upon completion of the utility box project within the required two week timeframe
- Artist recognition via your signature on the utility box (no larger than 3" x 5")
- Notable mention of our artists in press release materials for the project
- Upon periodic updates, artist name, artwork title, and location of artwork will be included in a public art map to be distributed throughout Downtown El Cajon
- Detailed inclusion of the artist name, artwork title, and photos of the artwork may be featured on the El Cajon CDC website, featured e-newsletter articles, and other promotional material
- Option to display signage to identify artist and project while painting the utility box

Policies and Guidelines

- Artwork must be submitted on the template provided as an accurate depiction of your work.
- El Cajon CDC will provide artists with a stipend of \$125 upon completion of the utility box project within the required two week timeframe. In addition, the El Cajon CDC will provide primer and clear coat finish for artists.
- Artists are responsible for prepping the utility box, painting the box, and applying a clear coat to the finished design. If you need assistance painting, please let us know.
- All artwork must be completed within two weeks of the start date.
- Scheduling is flexible. Artists may paint the utility box at their own leisure within the two week period.
- Artists must sign a volunteer waiver and participation agreement on or before the start date.



Instructions for Painting

Once your artwork is selected, the El Cajon CDC will send you a notification letter and contact you when a box is available to set up a brief orientation and a painting timeframe. You have **two weeks** after the mutually determined start date to finish transforming your utility box into a visual gem. A friendly staff member will walk you through the steps below. We will also coach you on how to obtain the supplies provided by the El Cajon CDC and instructions for receiving your artist stipend.

Step 1: Schedule a brief orientation with the El Cajon CDC and gather your supplies

At your orientation, you will receive some of your utility box prepping supplies, directions to your utility box, and an overview of the painting instructions. At this time you will also sign a volunteer waiver and participation agreement.

Below is a comprehensive checklist of highly recommended supplies for the best painting outcome and your personal comfort. **El Cajon CDC will provide all supplies indicated with a check mark.**

- ✓ UArt signage to identify the artist while working
- Stool or chair for comfort
- Umbrella for shade
- Drinking water
- Bucket to hold water
- Water for paint brushes, etc.
- Paint brushes
- Painters tape
- Drop cloth or plastic sheeting
- ✓ Biodegradable cleanser
- Sander
- Fine-grade sandpaper
- Rags and / or paper towels
- ✓ Spray bottle
- ✓ Metal primer paint
- Matte medium or gloss medium
- Acrylic Paint:
 - Recommended: Liquitex Acrylic High-Viscosity Paint in tubes or Nova Color Lightfastness 1
- ✓ Clear Coat Finish

Step 2: Prepping the utility box

Follow these simple steps to prep your utility box:

- 1) Clean the surface with the biodegradable cleanser such as Simple Green provided by the El Cajon CDC.
- 2) Rinse and allow it to dry completely.
- 3) Sand the cabinet with fine-grade sandpaper until the surface feels rough. Be sure to wipe all surfaces with a damp cloth to remove all dust/grit from the surface after sanding. **It is recommended that all cabinets be sanded prior to painting, as many have an anti-graffiti coating that will interfere with paint adhesion.**
- 4) Finish by applying a coat of metal primer on the cabinet provided by the El Cajon CDC.
- 5) Return the cleanser, spray bottle, and primer to the El Cajon CDC office directly after you are finished with the materials so that other artists may have these tools available.



Step 3: Painting

Have fun! This is your time to highlight your work and your talent. It is highly recommended that a matte medium or gloss medium be mixed with the acrylic paint. This will allow the artist to paint “transparent” layers that can be layered for depth.

Please be careful...

- Do not paint over/obliterate any identification numbers/codes. Paint around them.
- Do not paint over keyholes or paint keyhole covers so that they cannot be opened.
- Do not obstruct any windows or viewing ports on the cabinet in any way.
- Do not use primer as your base coat on the utility box.



Step 4: Notification of completion and preserving your artwork

When you've finished painting your design, please advise Rebecca Reyes, Community Development Associate. The El Cajon CDC will give you the protective clear coat to preserve your artwork at this time.

After notifying the El Cajon CDC and obtaining the clear coat, use a damp cloth to wipe down the cabinet before applying it to preserve your artwork for all to enjoy. **Apply a minimum of two (2) coats to the finished design. This is an extremely critical step to keep your box in excellent condition.**

Return clear coat and any additional borrowed supplies to the El Cajon CDC. Congratulations! You have successfully painted a utility box. Thank you for sharing your gift.

Step 5: Artist stipend is awarded

Upon thorough completion of your project within the two week timeframe, you will receive your artist stipend for \$125.

UArt FAQs

When will my artwork be reviewed?

Artwork can always be submitted but it will not be approved until a committee meeting is held. The committee will convene following the submission deadline or as often as needed depending on the amount of artwork submitted.



How will I be notified that my artwork has been selected?

You will be notified that your artwork has been selected by a formal letter after the selection committee has approved the artwork. When a utility box is ready, the El Cajon CDC will follow up with a phone call to assign you a box and coordinate a timeline. Please be aware that this process can be lengthy. Approved artwork must also be suitable for a box and its natural environment.

Who selects the artwork?

A selection committee comprised of City of El Cajon representatives, El Cajon CDC staff, and community members select the artwork. An artist may submit several designs at once for the committee to review.

What does the selection committee look for when selecting artwork?

The UArt selection committee is honored to review ideas from talented artists. The committee looks for colorful, positive artwork that celebrates the people and identity of Downtown El Cajon. Ideal artwork will use bright, vibrant colors and designs that stand out at a distance and communicate something about El Cajon – its past happenings, signature community events, unique businesses, natural beauty, culture, and more. As a concept is created, we encourage you to really visualize how your design will look from far away and from all sides. It is definitely a balance: a design that is too intricate is difficult to see, and by the same token, a design that has too much blank space may invite unwanted graffiti (although this is rare). To learn more about El Cajon visit www.downtownelcajon.com for links to additional historical resources.

Can I participate more than once?

Yes. It is possible for artists to participate more than once. While the El Cajon CDC tries to incorporate as many different artists as possible throughout the project, we are always grateful for enthusiastic participants. You may also submit several designs at once.

Can I paint at my leisure? Is there a fixed schedule?

Artists may paint according to their own schedule as long as the project is completed within two weeks of the start date.

Do I get to choose my utility box?

Artwork is placed by the El Cajon CDC with recommendations from the selection committee and approval to paint from the City of El Cajon and SDG&E.

Can I change my original design?

It is not recommended to change your original submitted design as it will need to be re-approved by the selection committee. While this is possible, it prolongs the process. Thank you for your cooperation.

What else can I do to support the arts in Downtown El Cajon?

If you are interested in donating to support the arts in Downtown El Cajon, please contact Kellye Buchanan, Resource Development Associate, by calling (619) 401-8858 or kellye@downtownelcajon.com. Thank you for encouraging art, igniting culture, and sharing your community spirit.

Thank you for participating in UArt! If you have any additional questions, please contact Rebecca Reyes, Community Development Associate, at (619) 401-8858 or Rebecca@downtownelcajon.com.





UArt Application

Thank you for your interest in participating in UArt: Downtown El Cajon's Utility Art Box Program! Please print clearly and complete the application thoroughly. Be sure to submit your artist bio and proposed design template with this form by **July 30, 2010**. Please include a self addressed stamped envelope if you would like your artwork returned to you. It is optional to include slides, prints, and/or promotional materials from your previous artwork to accompany this application.

PERSONAL INFORMATION			
Last Name	First Name	Date Submitted	
Current Street Address			
City	State	Zip	Email Address
Home Phone	Work Phone	Cell Phone	Fax Number
If under 18 years old, age	Name of School		School Grade

ARTWORK DESCRIPTION		
Title of Submission	Medium	Artwork to be returned? Yes No <i>If yes, be sure to include a self addressed stamped envelope</i>
Design Description (rendering must be submitted in color in the template provided, showing all sides and top)		
What does this artistic rendering communicate about Downtown El Cajon's culture, history, and/or identity?		
Interested in donating materials? Yes No <i>If yes, please list what you are willing to give:</i>		

GETTING TO KNOW THE ARTIST
**PLEASE ATTACH YOUR BIO OR SAMPLES OF PAST ARTWORK TO THIS APPLICATION WITH YOUR SUBMISSION.
Why is public art important to you?
Tell us why you believe in Downtown El Cajon. Anything else you would like to share?

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: July 30, 2010

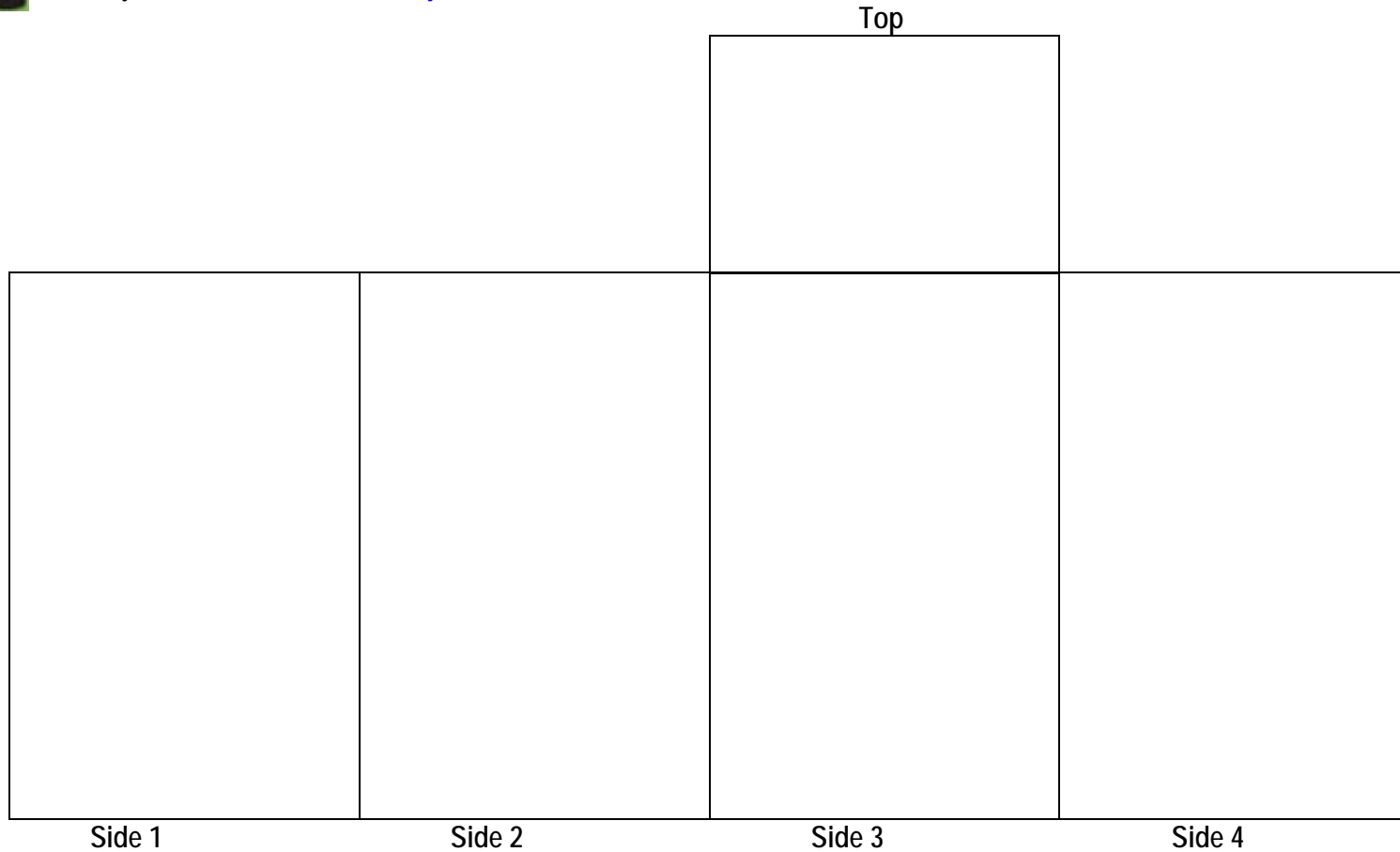
Please return completed form & accompanying materials to:
El Cajon Community Development Corporation
ATTN: Rebecca Reyes, Community Development Associate
131 East Main Street, Suite 201
El Cajon, CA 92020





Downtown El Cajon UArt Template

This is a diagram of a typical utility box showing four sides and the top. Use it to show the image you would like to paint as it would be painted. From past experience, we have found that unique colors and bold graphics work well, along with bright images that complement pedestrian activity. The Selection Committee looks for colorful artwork that celebrates the people and identity of Downtown El Cajon. To learn more about El Cajon visit www.downtownelcajon.com.



Note: Actual utility boxes vary in size and shape. Please be prepared to adjust your artwork to fit the box you are assigned. Thank you for your flexibility.