

Request for Qualifications Downtown Entrance Plaza Redesign Columbus, Indiana

Issued:

February 22, 2024

Submission Deadline:

4:00 p.m. (EST) on Thursday, March 21, 2024

**Issued on Behalf of the City of Columbus and
the Columbus Redevelopment Commission by:**

Columbus Design Institute

408 6th Street

Columbus, Indiana 47201

Laura Garrett, Director of Partnerships

laura@landmarkcolumbus.org

408 Sixth Street
Columbus IN 47201
812 657 0995

1/5



Introduction to the Opportunity

Project

Columbus Design Institute, on behalf of the City of Columbus and the Redevelopment Commission, seeks design qualifications for the redesign of the Downtown Entrance Plaza, which encompasses the POW/MIA/Law Enforcement Plaza and Robert D. Garton Veterans Plaza. The primary focus of this RFQ is to identify and solicit a qualification submittal from qualified design professionals.

408 Sixth Street
Columbus IN 47201
812 657 0995

The goals for the project are

1. **Transform** this gateway entry to the city to be more attractive, safe, and accessible for all while maintaining green space and allowing more activity from and interaction with downtown residents, employees, and visitors.
2. **Collaborate** with organizations with a stake in the property to creatively solve site deficits and design for greater use, enjoyment, and connectivity to the 1821 Trail, downtown, and future riverfront development.
3. **Improve** pedestrian-friendly design features with the vehicular experience ensuring the site design creates a positive experience and complements the key entry features of the Bob Stewart Bridge, Veterans Memorial Park Plaza, and the Bartholomew County Courthouse.
4. **Ensure** compliance with the American Disabilities Act and the Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWG).

2/5

Site

The Downtown Entrance Plaza is approximately 1.5 acres and encompasses two plazas located on the north and south sides of State Road 46, just a short distance northeast of the Robert N. Stewart Bridge. As a main entry into Columbus, approximately 28,000 vehicles pass through this plaza each day. The areas have been, at times, separately or jointly referred to as the POW/MIA or Law Enforcement Plaza, the Robert D. Garton Veterans Plaza, and the Public Safety Plaza. The Entrance Plaza is currently overgrown and underutilized. It serves as an important entryway into Downtown Columbus, and this project represents an opportunity to integrate this space into other current or future developments in the area. The two halves form a circle, a key feature of the design completed by Michael VanValkenburgh and Associates (MVVA) in 2000.

The Columbus Redevelopment Commission recently constructed the 1821 Bicentennial Trail as the seminal project celebrating Columbus and Bartholomew County's Bicentennial theme of "Common Ground". The trail connects to the Entrance Plaza on the south and is considered, along with the Riverfront Project further south, a key addition to the Columbus Park Foundation's trail system. When complete, it will connect the nearly 30 miles of trails that extend throughout the city.

Directly to the north of the entrance plaza is a 200-unit apartment complex known as The Cole, which boasts a 97% occupancy rate. To the east of the plaza is



the J. Irwin Miller Architecture Program at the Eskenazi School of Art, Architecture + Design, located in the former Republic Newspaper building, which is one of the seven designated National Historic Landmarks in the city.

Columbus Overview

Located in south-central Indiana, the City of Columbus (City) is home to over 50,000 residents and is the largest metropolitan area between Indianapolis and Louisville. It is located in Bartholomew County, which had an estimated 2022 population of 83,540. Both are growing steadily. Despite its relatively small size, Columbus generates significant out-of-state tourism primarily for its commitment to architecture and design. In addition, Columbus is the headquarters of Cummins, Inc., a Fortune 200 company, whose global headquarters is located two blocks north of the plaza.

In recent years, the Columbus Redevelopment Commission has been instrumental in the development of downtown Columbus, along with the City and private entities. The downtown area has a key node of restaurants, shops, and attractions, making it a compelling place to visit, host an event, live, or work. Over time, the downtown has been the subject of a series of redevelopment efforts to ensure that downtown evolves to remain relevant and vibrant.

Process

An optional pre-response, on-site meeting will be held on **March 7, 2024 at 11:00 am (EST)** in the small parking lot located on-site along Jackson Street. All submitting teams may have a representative at the meeting. Please limit your attendees to no more than two people per team. If planning to attend, please respond by **March 5, 2024** via e-mail at laura@landmarkcolumbus.org.

After reviewing all submittals, a short list of design firms will be invited to an interview. Following interviews, the selected firm shall respond with a proposal. The top-ranked design team is expected to be notified by the spring of 2024.

Submitters should not construe a response to this RFQ as a contract nor infer a commitment of any kind, your response only serves as notice that the firm desires to be considered. The RFQ does not commit the City of Columbus or Redevelopment Commission to pay for costs incurred in the submission of a response to this RFQ or for any costs incurred prior to the execution of a final contract.

408 Sixth Street
Columbus IN 47201
812 657 0995

3/5



Requirements for Qualification Submittal

01 Identification, Qualification, and Key Staff

- Provide the firm name, address of the responsible office from which the design work will be performed, and the name and e-mail address of the contact person authorized to negotiate for the associated work.
- List the Project Manager and other key staff members, including key sub-consultant staff.
- Identify similar projects completed by the key staff members and qualifications relative to this project. Indicate current and previous experience on projects within the City of Columbus.
- Describe the capacity of consultant staff and their ability to perform the work in a timely manner relative to present workload.

408 Sixth Street
Columbus IN 47201
812 657 0995

4/5

02 RFQ's shall be limited to twenty (20) 8 ½" x 11" pages that include identification, qualifications, key staff, and project approach.

03 RFQ's must be received no later than **4:00 pm (EST) on Thursday, March 21, 2024.** Responses received after the submission deadline will not be considered. Submittals must include all required attachments to be considered for selection.

04 The selected firm shall provide personnel local to the project, so neither commuting nor lodging expenses are incurred.

05 Provide a description of your project approach relative to the project goals as described.

06 Confirm your firm has visited the City of Columbus and understands the uniqueness of the site.

07 Address your firm's technical understanding of the project and services, cost containment practices, innovative ideas, and any other relevant information concerning your firm's qualifications. If available, provide specific examples of where your firm has worked on a project of scale.

08 Provide an estimate of anticipated design fees for the project. This is just an estimate based on what you know about our project. This will not be a selection consideration. Cost information is being requested for budgeting purposes only.

09 These are turbulent times with the escalating costs of material and labor. Provide any time-saving and/or cost-saving measures that you would use to keep the project on schedule and on budget. The City is well aware of our responsibility to make timely decisions.

10 All submittals must be submitted via e-mail to Laura Garrett (contact information on the cover sheet).



Desired Project Schedule

February 22, 2024	RFQ Issued
March 7, 2024	Optional on-site meeting
March 21, 2024	Submittal due
April 8-12, 2024	Interviews
April 24, 2024	Selection of design team
May - August 2024	Design
TBD	Construction Bidding
TBD	Construction
TBD	Project completion + Ribbon Cutting

408 Sixth Street
Columbus IN 47201
812 657 0995

Recently Completed City & Community Plans and Projects

5/5

[LINK] [Envision Columbus 2018](#)

[LINK] [City of Columbus Comprehensive Plan](#)

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
- Central Area Corridor Plan
- Downtown Strategic Development Plan

[LINK] [City of Columbus, Indiana Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan](#)

[LINK] [Columbus Riverfront Redevelopment Project](#)

[LINK] [2nd Street Thoroughfare Project](#)

[LINK] Other information about the [Columbus Redevelopment activities can be found here](#)

Questions

Any questions regarding any aspect of the RFQ process shall be submitted in writing by email to: laura@landmarkcolumbus.org

All questions and requests for clarification must be submitted in writing and will be answered in writing. All questions will be aggregated in a Question and Answer sheet that will then be provided to all respondents who have contacted me regarding their intention to submit a response.

About Columbus Design Institute

Landmark Columbus Foundation is a public resource and thought leader for Progressive Preservation in Bartholomew County; an advocate and educator for and about cultural heritage; and a source of inspiration to advance good design for public benefit. Columbus Design Institute is a program of the Landmark Columbus Foundation. Columbus Design Institute is a technical service initiative that promotes the Value of Good Design that built Columbus. It collaborates with partners through its design process to encourage meaningful investments in the sustainable and equitable development of communities.



2022–24 Downtown Entrance Plaza Project Supporting Documents

408 Sixth Street
Columbus IN 47201
812 657 0995

1/12



Downtown Entrance Plaza by Hadley Fruits

The Landmark Columbus Foundation through Columbus Design Institute (CDI) collaborates with partners through its design process to encourage meaningful investments in the sustainable and equitable development of communities. Partnering with the City of Columbus, CDI will lead the project exploring the Downtown Entrance Plaza, leveraging the network and design processes established by CDI to benefit the community, further reinforcing the modern legacy that shaped the past, present, and future of Columbus. This project acts as an important entryway into downtown and also an opportunity to integrate this area into other key projects in the area.

2022–24 Downtown Entrance Plaza Project The Value of Good Design

408 Sixth Street
Columbus IN 47201
812 657 0995

A key guiding value for this project is one of the leadership values of our community — the value of good design, outlined by Heritage Fund, the Community Foundation of Bartholomew County.

2/12

The Value of Good Design:

Our community is literally world-renowned for our high quality architecture and we believe in its value. We believe in Winston Churchill’s observation that “we shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us”. However, our process of design-thinking runs deeper than just our built-environment. We use the principles of design as we strive for process excellence and community growth. We believe that nothing is more expensive than mediocrity and that good design need not cost any more than bad design. In this way, our entire community becomes the physical manifestation of the values and spirit of the people who have chosen to be different by design in the pursuit of lasting excellence. We believe if you elevate the physical and social environment, you raise the bar for everything else, especially citizens’ expectations of themselves.

2022–24 Downtown Entrance Plaza Project Project Goals

408 Sixth Street
Columbus IN 47201
812 657 0995

01

Transform this gateway entry to the city to be more attractive, safe, and accessible for all while maintaining green space and allowing more activity from and interaction with downtown residents, employees, and visitors.

3/12

02

Collaborate with organizations with a stake in the property to creatively solve site deficits and design for greater use, enjoyment, and connectivity to the 1821 Trail, downtown, and future riverfront development.

03

Improve pedestrian-friendly design features with the vehicular experience ensuring the site design creates a positive experience and complements the key entry features of the Bob Stewart Bridge, Veterans Memorial Park Plaza, and the Bartholomew County Courthouse.

04

Ensure compliance with the American Disabilities Act and the Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWG).

2022–24 Downtown Entrance Plaza Project Project Goals

408 Sixth Street
Columbus IN 47201
812 657 0995

General Project Timeline

4/12

Fall 2021	Stakeholder Interviews by IU Architecture Students
Fall 2022	Project Team Development and Data Gathering
Winter / Spring 2024	RFQ for Design Project
Summer 2024	Design
Fall 2024	Construction

Project Budget

\$450,000, with no more than \$50,000 spent on design

The Redevelopment Commission will fund some of the site’s infrastructure improvements by using dollars from a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district that helped fund the construction of The Cole apartment complex.

Media

The Republic Article (26 July 2022)

[LINK] [*Taking another look: City and Landmark Columbus considering redesign of downtown plazas*](#)

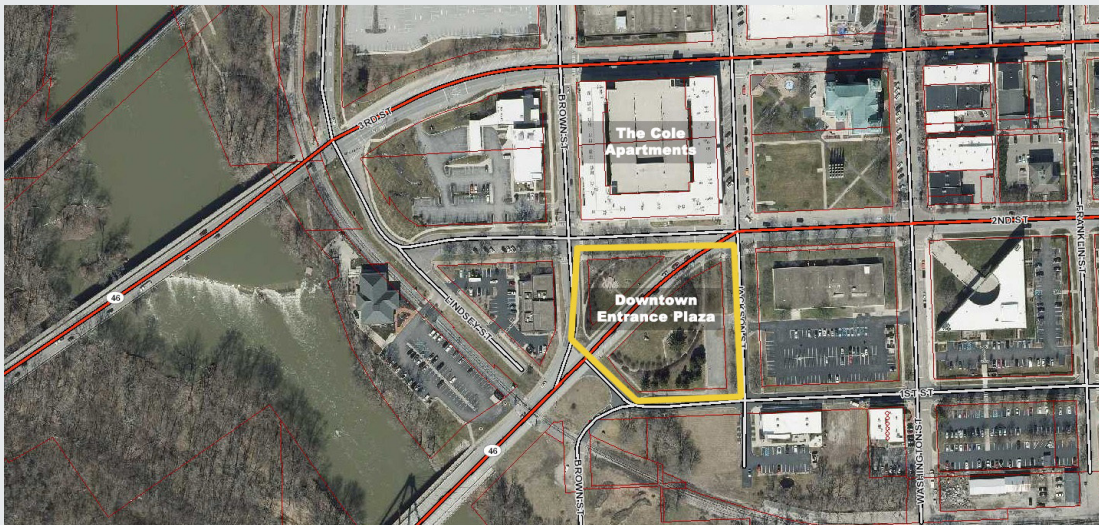
The Republic Article (11 July 2023)

[LINK] [*Rethinking the ‘plaza’: Designer sought for downtown law enforcement memorial*](#)

The Republic Article (24 July 2023)

[LINK] [*Plaza upgrade: Local veterans organizations offer previous suggestions for site*](#)

2022–24 Downtown Entrance Plaza Project Site Description



408 Sixth Street
Columbus IN 47201
812 657 0995

5/12

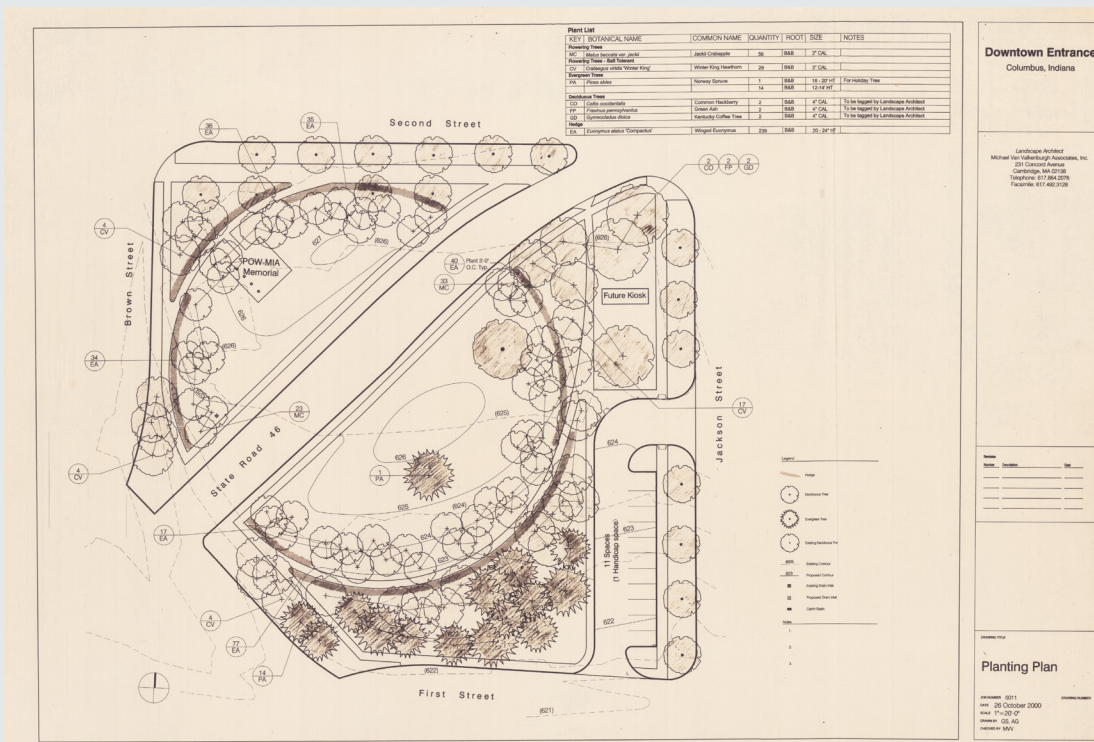
Aerial of the site and surroundings from Elevate Maps

The Downtown Entrance Plaza is approximately 1.5 acres and encompasses two plazas located on the north and south sides of State Road 46, just a short distance northeast of the Robert N. Stewart Bridge. As a main entry into Columbus, approximately 28,000 vehicles pass through this plaza each day. The areas have, at times, been separately or jointly referred to as the POW/MIA or Law Enforcement Plaza, the Robert D. Garton Veterans Plaza, and the Public Safety Plaza. Viewed from above, the two halves form a circle. The plaza is immediately south of the Cole, a large apartment building, and has the potential to serve as a park amenity for the residents.

2022-24 Downtown Entrance Plaza Project Site Description

408 Sixth Street
Columbus IN 47201
812 657 0995

6/12



Planting Plan created by Michael Van Valkenburgh

The site was originally designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates (MVVA) in the fall of 2000 as a green space to be experienced from a vehicle. In 1997, MVVA designed the Veterans Memorial and Courthouse Square Park, which are adjacent to this site. There have been some additions to the site over the years, but the general layout and circular form with plantings remain.

2022–24 Downtown Entrance Plaza Project Site Description



Downtown Entrance Plaza by Hadley Fruits

408 Sixth Street
Columbus IN 47201
812 657 0995

7/12

The northwest area includes a plaza with 2 benches and flags for the city, state, nation and POW MIA remembrance, as well as the POW MIA Plaza stone, which is engraved with the POW prayer. Jo Saylor's "Crack the Whip" is nearby and is a 4-foot tall bronze sculpture of four children playing crack the whip, a children's game dating to the late 1800s. Commissioned by Mr. and Mrs. James K. Baker as a gift to honor Arvin employees, the piece was originally placed at the former Arvin Corporate headquarters on Central Avenue. After Arvin left Columbus, the Baker's relocated the piece to a spot more accessible to the public. The piece was gifted to the Heritage Fund – The Community Foundation of Bartholomew County and moved to its current location. The two entry points serve as memorials and include the C. Dennis Chomel Memorial to the east, which includes a bench looking towards the Veteran's Memorial, and the Law Enforcement and Firefighters Memorial, also called the Public Safety Plaza to the west. This area was an Eagle Scout Project completed by Jordan T. Meek on September 11, 2002.

The southeast area, Garton Plaza, is identified by a large concrete sign identifying the Robert D. Garton Veterans Plaza. It also contains the sculpture, Daquqi, a nine-ton sculpture by Peter Lundberg. The Daquqi takes its name from a Rumi poem. The piece is made of concrete and stainless steel that features a circular detailing done by the artist. This section is adjacent to the 1821 Bicentennial Trail and also includes a parking lot.

2022–24 Downtown Entrance Plaza Project City Plans

408 Sixth Street
Columbus IN 47201
812 657 0995

Envision Columbus

The [ENVISION COLUMBUS Downtown Strategic Development Plan](#) addresses the traditional commercial area of downtown Columbus (938-acres), as well as nearby neighborhoods and parks. The Plan is an update to the 2005 Downtown Strategic Development Plan and provides a well-defined vision, a thorough analysis, and a series of bold but achievable recommendations. Public input throughout the project ensured that the plan truly represents our community’s aspirations and priorities.

8/12

City of Columbus Comprehensive Plan

[The Comprehensive Plan](#) is a long-term statement of a community’s vision for its future. The plan provides goals, policies, and other guidance for future land use and development and currently includes 9 separate elements adopted over time beginning in 1999 with the Goals and Policies Element. These Goals and Policies, together with the Land Use Plan Element and the Thoroughfare Plan Element, form the basic components of the Comprehensive Plan. Comprehensive Plans are intended to evolve over time. For Columbus, this evolution has occurred as additional, more detailed elements are added for specific geographic areas and topics. Supplemental elements that impact the Downtown Entrance Plaza include the Downtown Strategic Development Plan, the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, and the Central Avenue Corridor Plan.

City of Columbus, Indiana Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan

The purpose of the [Parks & Recreation Master Plan](#) is to serve as a usable “blueprint” to the staff, Park Board, and the City Council in preparing a needs assessment and action plan for the growing and extremely diverse population that calls Columbus home. This document is intended to be a dynamic and forward thinking one to strengthen existing programs, facilities, and amenities to serve as a road map for the future.

2022–24 Downtown Entrance Plaza Project Surrounding Projects

408 Sixth Street
Columbus IN 47201
812 657 0995

Though the Downtown Entrance Plaza area is small in size, the connections to future projects and plans begin to create a more defined and energized southern area of the city.

9/12

Columbus Riverfront Project

The Columbus Redevelopment Commission is leading an initiative to improve the appearance, recreational function, environmental quality, and economic benefit of the East Fork of the White River between the 2nd and 3rd Street bridges.

The 1821 Bicentennial Trail

The Bicentennial Commission and City of Columbus developed the seminal project for the Columbus Area Bicentennial with the 1821 Bicentennial Trail extension along First Street, beginning at the Haw Creek Trail, which ends at Lafayette Avenue, and currently ends at Water Street. This trail extension includes architectural and art elements to encompass the 2021 Bicentennial theme of “Common Ground”. The trail is a key addition to the Columbus Parks and Recreation Department’s People Trail system and connects the nearly 30 miles of trail extending throughout the city.

The Taylor and Downtown Grocery

The Envision Columbus study gives recommendations for further growth in the downtown area, which includes multi-family housing as well as an urban grocery store. The Taylor Apartments were designed with these recommendations in mind and are now completed and leasing all units. The multi-family development includes:

- 200 townhouse type units with studio and 1-2 bedroom apartments.
- A location for an urban grocer on the ground floor that would be accessible to residents as well as the general public.
- Additional parking to support residents as well as visitors.

2022–24 Downtown Entrance Plaza Project Stakeholder Interviews

** Information provided by Brittian Brewer*

408 Sixth Street
Columbus IN 47201
812 657 0995

Students from the Professional Practice Class in the J. Irwin Architecture Program with the Indiana University, Eskenazi School of Art, Architecture + Design, facilitated by Brittian Brewer conducted stakeholder interviews for the project. A full transcript of those interviews can be found [here](#). Britian Brewer provided the following comments, program directive impact, and program recommendations/requests related to each interview.

10/12

Britian Brewer's general conclusions from the Interviews are as follows:

- The two parks serve as a green gateway to the city. This “gateway” effect might be enhanced in a new design for the park.
- The two parks already serve and can be enhanced to serve as a memorial park for fallen service providers and the POW / MIA and fallen military.
- The two parks and the awareness of the existing and proposed memorials that might be accommodated are well served by being located along the 1821 Trail. An entrance from the Heritage Trail should be part of any new design.

2022–24 Downtown Entrance Plaza Project Stakeholder Interviews

** Information provided by Brittian Brewer*

408 Sixth Street
Columbus IN 47201
812 657 0995

Columbus Police Department — National Memorial Service (fallen officers), once a year, 30-60 minutes.

11/12

Columbus Fire Department — Implies that Police and Fire memorials do not have space to gather for their yearly memorials and are not easily accessed in their current location.

Bartholomew County Sheriff — No interview, Dog memorial mentioned by them (at other times) and others (reference in interview with Police).

POW / MIA — “...concerned about and invested in ... (a) site as a public place of remembrance and education.” Improve awareness and visibility of the site. Honor each monument on the site. “...make it a place to educate, reflect, remember, show respect, gather and bring awareness..(particularly to) POW/MIA.” Encourage use of military custom and protocols in placement of flag and placement and features of monuments. Features to accommodate public speaking. Connection to 1821 Trail encouraged to increase public awareness. A park and monuments worthy of being on public tours. Allowance and creation of “intimate space” for reflection.

Bob and Barb Garton — Implied—advantage of the connection to the 1821 Trail, exposing visitors to more of the history of the city and its citizens. Improved signage can serve the public better. Honored by public recognition and association with memorials.

Zack Ellison — Speaks to the larger side as being more accommodating of the memorials that might have speakers and/or gatherings. Gatherings once or twice a year. MIA specifically needs a place. Makes note of “a phrase (from) Harry McCauley...” a place to find peace and be at peace... in the middle of the city” speaking of the memorial by the courthouse, but applicable to this location as well. Suggests accommodation of direct groups in different sections. He notes the importance of good criteria.

2022–24 Downtown Entrance Plaza Project Columbus, Indiana Civic Identity

We are Columbus, Indiana—a town of 50,000 that nurtures the virtues of small in the most ambitious of ways—to be the best city of its size in America. Small in number, we are purposefully large in community; giant in manufacturing; monumental in culture, art, architecture and design; and most importantly, big on quality of life.

We are a small community, with a growing global presence representing 41 countries, with more than one of every 10 an international resident. Our top-ranked schools give voice to 54 different languages. Our community strives to be inclusive and respectful of our differences to create equitable outcomes for all our residents.

Honored by the American Institute of Architects as one of the top six architecture cities in the nation, Columbus welcomes the tens of thousands each year who make the cultural pilgrimage to tour our city's iconic, mid century destinations, while we who dwell here are fortunate to be inspired by them daily in our places of learning, business, worship and community.

We are comfortably cosmopolitan, choosing first-name familiarity over the anonymity of metropolitan life. Home to a Fortune 500 company as well as 37 foreign companies, our work is never more than minutes from our children's schools, family parks, recreational trails, and the natural landscape of the two rivers that border town. The Robert N. Stewart suspension bridge is a dynamic gateway to a variety of cultural experiences in three major cities and three states—Indianapolis, Louisville, and Cincinnati—all within an easy drive.

We believe we can better know ourselves by understanding others. Journeying beyond our Midwestern roots, institutions such as the Columbus Chinese Language School and the Hindu Association of Southern Indiana's Sri Ganesh Mandir Temple enrich our local perspective with educational opportunities and a world of cultural events for all to experience.

We are a powerhouse of innovative makers with the highest concentration of mechanical and industrial engineers in the country. While Columbus is the headquarters for Cummins, we also produce more than one million nuts and bolts daily. With 40% percent of our residents employed in manufacturing, Columbus ranks in the top 2% of U.S. manufacturing cities, with manufacturers focused on powerful technologies for the world's future. That's huge for small.

We embrace our legacy of curiosity and learning, and believe our future success begins each and every day in the Columbus schools. As the school district of choice in Indiana, Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation is recognized for its innovative Pre-K through 12 programs. AirPark Columbus brings three of Indiana's most prestigious colleges to one, local campus. A wealth of learning opportunities promises Columbus full-circle empowerment—superior education leading to local career opportunities that enrich our city's growth and success.

Our downtown is a quaint, 36-block grid intersecting numbered streets with those honoring Presidents and our favorite trees. A robust and cultural hub, the city center welcomes visitors and locals on a leisurely stroll to experience the best of Columbus—international cuisine, creative retail, galleries, a historic ice cream parlor open since 1900, coffee shops, breweries, public art, architectural landmarks, civic buildings, churches, a Visitors Center, and businesses.

We champion the spirit of competition, coming together to inspire the best in each other. Every summer, Columbus parks and fields come alive with more than 300 amateur, state and regional sports tournaments. We are also here for the long run, hosting and cheering on more than 5000 runners who descend upon Indiana's fastest marathon course for the annual Mill Race Marathon—a Boston Marathon qualifying event—as well as a half marathon and 5K run/walk.

We have never been ones to idly sit by. A legacy of achieving civic excellence inspires our community to explore creative forums of discussion and action. Exhibit Columbus is an internationally recognized, biennial program created by Landmark Columbus Foundation. Spanning three months each biennial year, the Exhibit Columbus Exhibition draws thousands to engage with installations and programming by international artists, architects and designers exploring solutions to the issues of our day, from sustainability and climate change to equity in the built environment.

We are Columbus, Indiana. Designed for Living. Different by Design.

408 Sixth Street
Columbus IN 47201
812 657 0995

12/12