



DC Public Library

Guide for Exhibit Applicants **Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library**

The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library (MLK Library) hosts temporary exhibits in spaces throughout the building. We invite District residents, including historians, artists, and other cultural creators, to apply to exhibit their projects at the MLK Library. Please review this guide carefully to learn more about our exhibit program, including information about each of the possible exhibit locations, and requirements for exhibit applicants.

The DC Public Library (DCPL) celebrates art and exhibits as a source of learning, discovery, growth, and connection. Exhibits at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library are key to expanding visitors' knowledge of the District's rich past and are a portal to engagement in the D.C.'s present and future. Exhibits may also be featured at neighborhood libraries, where space allows.

The Library's Art & Exhibit program is guided by our Art & Exhibitions Policy, which can be accessed from our website at this link:
<https://www.dclibrary.org/sites/default/files/DCPL%20Art%20and%20Exhibits%20Policy%20-%20Final%20-%20March%2024%2C%202021.pdf>

Updated August 1, 2024

The Exhibits Committee at DC Public Library evaluates temporary exhibition proposals according to the following factors, which are equally weighted:

- Factor 1 – Quality and Accessibility of Content Presented
Level of excellence demonstrated in previous work samples, including overall coherence, clarity, innovation; emotional impact; accessibility to a broad audience.
- Factor 2 – Demonstrated Professional Accomplishment in Chosen Field
Including exhibition history, awards, honors, and publications, demonstrated proficiency and technical knowledge of the medium(s) in which the incumbent regularly works, including aptitude for planning and collaboration with partners and track record of completing projects on time and on budget.
- Factor 3 - Proposed Approach, Including any Public Engagement
Including feasibility of plan and budget, demonstrated understanding of project goals, how the community will be reflected in the final exhibition, and how well the proposer knows and understands the subject matter and Washington, D.C. and the DC Public Library.
- Factor 4 Connection of Past Work to D.C. Culture and/or History
Including potential for resonance with local communities and experience working on projects related to D.C. culture, community, and/or heritage.
- Factor 5 (for exhibits considered January – December 2026) Connection to America's 250th Anniversary
Relevance of proposed exhibition to Washington, D.C.'s commemoration of America's 250th anniversary in 2026. Note that the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission was established by Congress (P.L. 114-196) to inspire Americans to participate in the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. The commission is charged with orchestrating the largest and most inclusive anniversary observance in our nation's history. The DC Public Library encourages proposals for creative arts and humanities exhibitions that make local connections to this national theme.

Notes on Funding:

- The library has limited funding available (that typically covers installation costs and exhibition staff support, but often does not cover items such as curatorial and artist fees, research, production, printing or framing, or packing and transportation).
- The budget you provide should show that your project is professional and feasible.
- Please be as transparent as possible about what confirmed funding you do and do not have.
- Exhibitors must provide their own insurance, and this should be reflected in your budget.
- See the end of this Guide for a budget template.

Eligibility and expectations:

- Individuals or groups proposing an exhibit are not required to live in the District but should demonstrate a connection to local history and culture.
- At this time, applications are not accepted for solo exhibits by living artists.
- An individual curator, group, or organization may submit only one (1) application per fiscal year (October—September).
- The length of time an exhibit is on view may be as short as 3 weeks and as long as 6 months, depending on other events taking place in the Library.
- **Exhibits may be located in one of the exhibit spaces** within The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library. In this Guide you can find a description of the five main exhibit spaces. You are encouraged to visit the building, join a scheduled tour, or contact MLKexhibits@dc.gov to gain a better understanding of the space.
- Proposals with flexibility in timeline and/or location may be more competitive, as it increases options for finding a space in the Library's schedule.
- If accepted, you must sign an exhibits agreement which includes releasing the Library from any responsibility for items in the exhibit. As part of this contract, curators will be required to carry general liability insurance, with requirements to be supplied by DCPL prior to signing the contract. The Library reserves the right to reverse a decision on hosting an exhibit and remove part, or all, of an exhibit without explanation.
- The Library may provide fine art insurance to cover the value of items on display. It is the curator's responsibility to request fine art insurance coverage and provide the total value of exhibited items.
- The exhibit agreement will also detail the responsibilities of each party. The proposer will be required to supervise all aspects of installation and deinstallation and will be responsible for ensuring that the exhibit is delivered on time and ready to hang.
- The MLK Library exhibit spaces use an art hanging wall system. No drilling, nails, or repainting will be permitted; all installation will be done by DCPL staff/contractors. The ability to accommodate oversize, fragile, high value, or multimedia items is limited and special requirements should be noted in your application.

- Note that exhibitions are installed in public space, and material cannot be left unsecured during the installation timeframe ; however, the Exhibits team will help block the space from public traffic to the extent possible during installation.
- Sales of artwork featured in exhibits may be possible, but sales are subject to a permit process (See [DCPL Sales Permitting Guidelines](#)); the Exhibits team is happy to work with curators on their questions related to sales.
- All marketing for approved exhibits must be coordinated with DCPL's communications department.
- We may ask about your flexibility to move the exhibit to a future year.

Please remember:

- The Library is a public space and is not a museum. Strong applications will reflect an understanding of the site and context.
- Patience and flexibility is appreciated. Staff review applications once a year and are limited in capacity to respond to individual queries.
- Info sessions are held at least once a year prior to application deadlines.

Master Checklist for Curators

Once your exhibit is confirmed, Exhibit curators will be expected to:

As early as possible (approximately 6-12 months ahead, or more):

- Submit a draft installation plan.
- Confirm installation, opening/closing, deinstallation dates.
- Provide proof of General Liability Insurance; notify the library of fine arts insurance needs.
- Sign contract (approximately 6-12 months ahead).
- Identify date(s) for one (1) public reception with food and any other public programming.
- Finalize the budget and get approval on any items funded or provided by DCPL.

After the contract is signed (starting approximately 3 months ahead) exhibit curators will be expected to:

- Provide a final installation plan or updates to the checklist
- Review guidelines on load-in/load-out, including use of the loading dock, freight elevator, and main entrance
- Provide marketing language for the exhibition and programs, including final exhibit title and credits
- Supply at least 1-3 good quality images for marketing purposes
- Allow DCPL to review exhibition wall text including title and credits; confirm final print files for any material printed by DCPL.
- Coordinate with DCPL on all public relations and promotions. Media interviews must be cleared with DCPL's Department of Communications in advance and throughout the exhibition.
- Fill out a sales permit form, if needed, for artworks featured in the exhibit.

During the contracted period for the exhibit, curators will be expected to:

- Coordinate delivery of material to/from MLK
- Supervise/assist with installation and deinstallation
- Be present for the reception and public program(s) as detailed in the contract.

Throughout the process, DCPL will:

- Provide a DCPL Exhibits Team point of contact for all aspects of coordination
- Review and give feedback on all texts to be published in the Library/on the website
- Require separate program contracts for any events that are unspecified in the exhibition contract (for most programming, a 2-3 month lead time is required).

- Provide at least one professional exhibits installer for the installation/deinstallation (exact needs are confirmed after the installation plan is received).
- Block the exhibit area with stanchions during the installation/deinstallation period (note that exhibitions are installed in public space, and material cannot be left unsecured during the installation timeframe)
- Provide food and soft drinks for one (1) reception, through support from the DC Public Library Foundation
- Provide marketing for the exhibition through the DCPL website, calendar, and social media channels and continue to coordinate with the curator on promotions during the run of the exhibition.

Sample Budget

Adapted from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities

| FY23 AEG Budget Template | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Cost | Estimated Amount | Notes |
| | | |
| Curator fee | | Not to exceed 20% of budget |
| Artist fees | | To ensure fair compensation, curators can consult national standard pay schedules for artists and arts professionals, such as: https://wageforwork.com/fee-calculator#top |
| Other consultants/expert/partner fees | | |
| Insurance | ~\$600 (based on 2023 budgets, obtain estimate from provider) | General liability insurance requirements to be supplied by DCPL prior to signing the contract; names of recommended insurance providers available upon request. |
| Installation | | Indicate approximately how many individuals/how many days of installation; DCPL will at least one professional exhibits installer for the installation/deinstallation |
| Gallery signage and labels | | |
| Printed brochures/fliers | | |
| Transportation of exhibit material | | |
| Frames and/or pedestals | | |
| Graphic design | | |
| Supplies | | |

Guidelines on Load-in and Load-out the MLK Library

The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library is located at 901 G St, N.W.



The loading docks are located on the rear of the building (if using a GPS use the following address: 908 G Place, N.W.) There are four bays. The largest size truck the bays can accommodate is 26 ft with hydraulics. Delivery through the loading dock is preferred; delivery through the front entrance of the library requires special permission/coordination with DCPL.



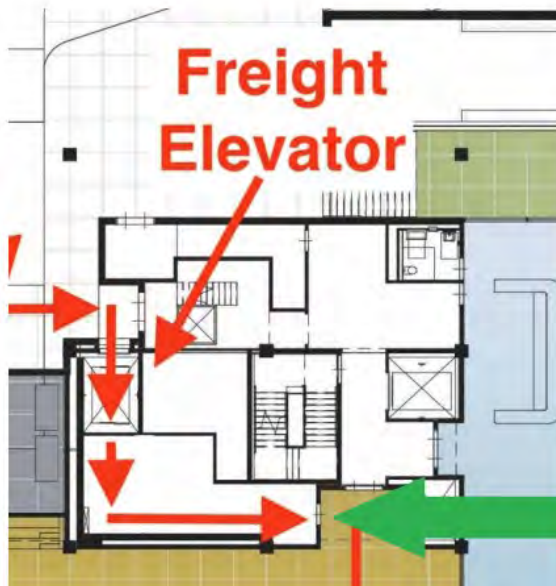
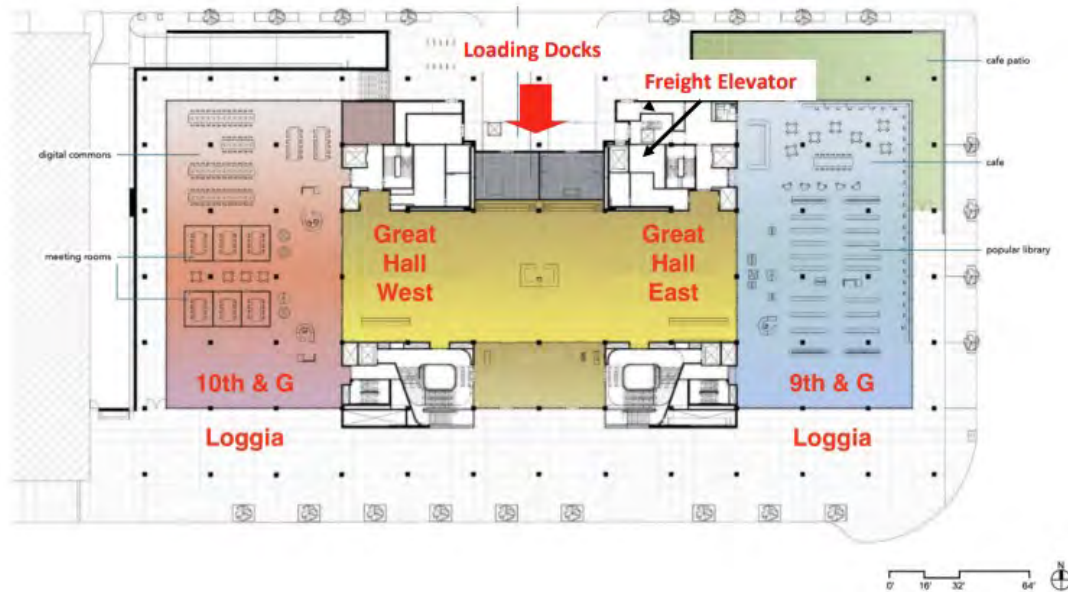
Freight Elevator:

The only way move freight into the building from the loading dock is by using the freight elevator.

- Clear height of elevator door opening – 8 feet – 0 inches
- Clear height inside of elevator cab – 9 feet – 0 inches
- Clear width of door opening into elevator cab – 4 feet – 6 inches
- Clear width of interior space inside of elevator cab – 5 feet – 9-1/2 inches
- Clear depth of interior space sill to sill – 10 feet – 3-3/4 inches



If delivering to the first floor:



Note: If delivering to the first floor, the opening from the access hallway to the Great Hall is 42".

First Floor Exhibit Spaces

There are four exhibit areas on the first floor of the MLK Library: Great Hall East, Great Hall West, 9th & G Streets, and 10th & G Streets.



Windows at 9th and G Streets and 10th and G Streets

This exterior view shows the location of the 9th & G and the 10th & G windows.



EXHIBIT SPACES AT MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL LIBRARY

The 9th & G and 10th & G windows allow for viewing of the exhibits from the loggia and sidewalk. Exhibits can be framed and hung using interior art rails.



Exhibits can also be printed on vinyl and applied to the interior side of the windows.



This photo shows an exhibit where the exhibitors, unable to hold programs indoors due to COVID, held the programs outside in the loggia in front of their exhibit.

EXHIBIT SPACES AT MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL LIBRARY

The 9th & G and the 10th & G exhibit spaces each have eight windows across and two windows high as well as two large vertical support beams. Each window is approximately 9ft x 9ft. (measurements are approximate, exhibitors are responsible for ensuring they have the correct measurements).



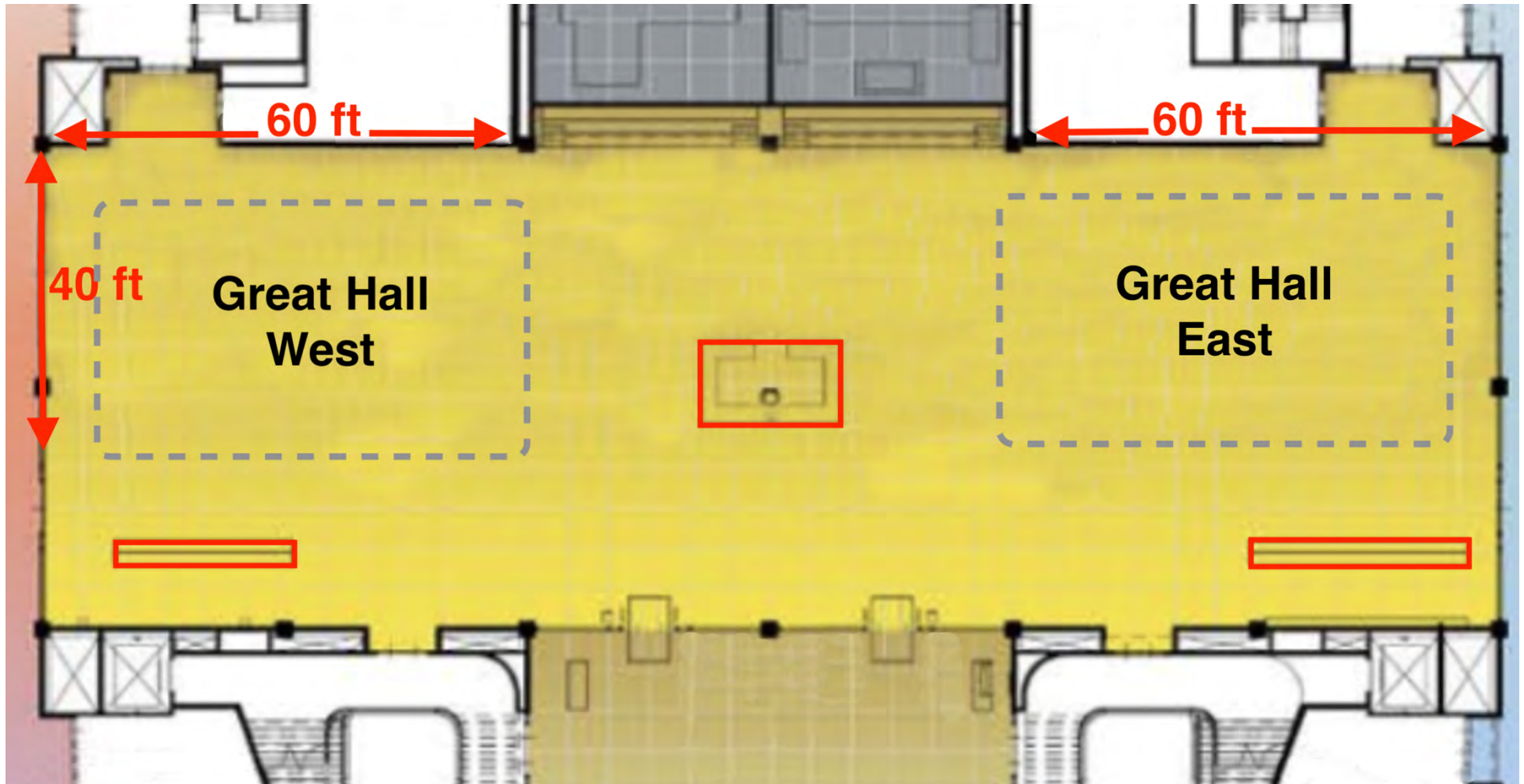
Art rails run along the top interior of the window frames and require a scissor lift for art installations. The Library does not provide a scissor lift.



The Great Hall:

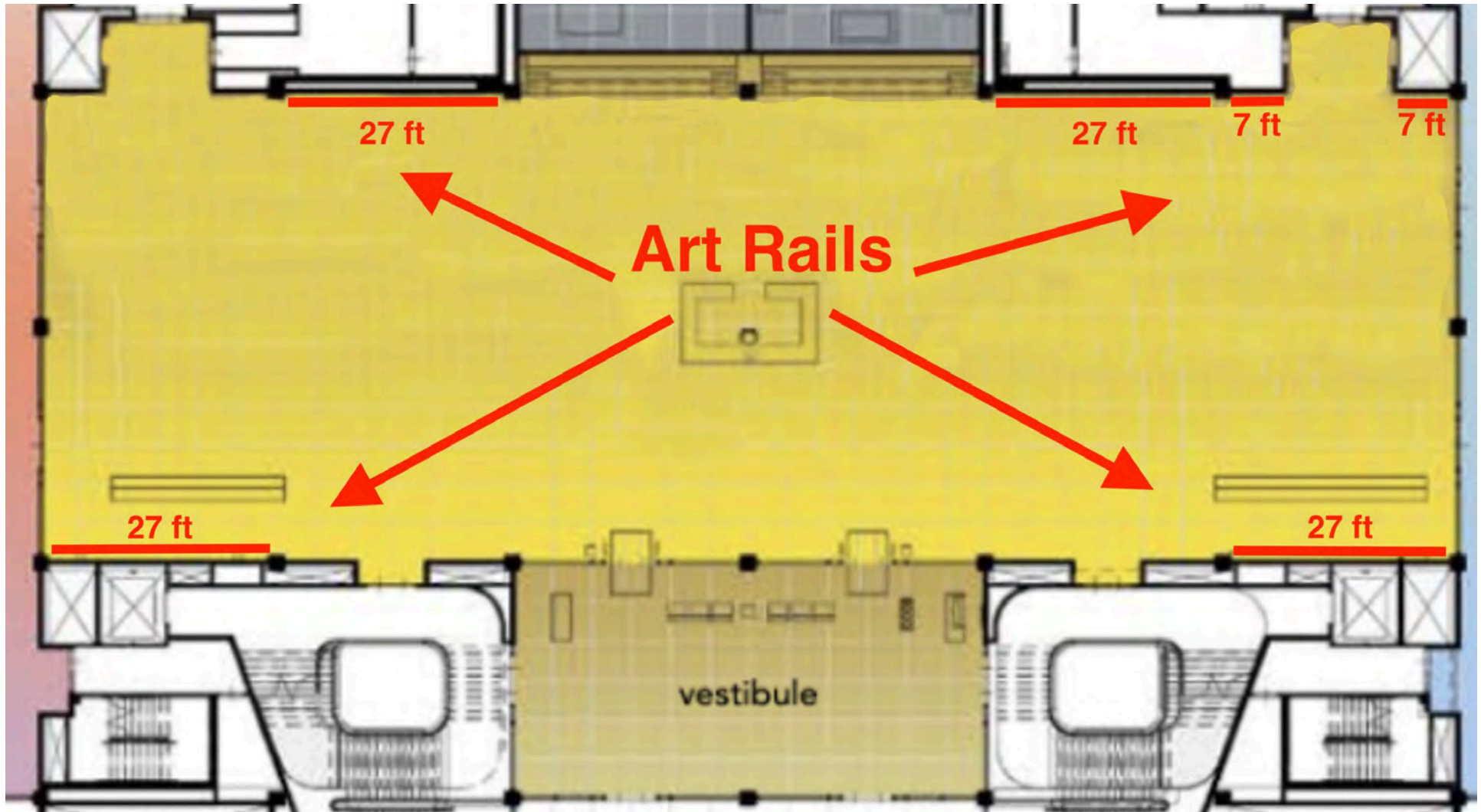
The Great Hall is approximately 180 ft x 60 ft and 18 ft in height.





This plan shows the approximate measurements for the two exhibit spaces in the Great Hall. The three red rectangles show the location of immovable counters.

There are art rails located in four areas of the Great Hall. Like with the windows, a scissor lift is needed to access the art rails.



Art Walls:

The library has 24 temporary exhibit walls, which are MILA-Walls Series 100. Each wall is 39.37" wide x 137.39 high. The art walls can be arranged in a number of different patterns. The arrangement shown in this photo is a rectangle comprised of 12 walls with 5 panels on each of the long sides and 1 panel on each of the short sides.



In this photo, the exhibit shown on the art walls is printed on vinyl and applied to the walls. There is also hardware to allow framed exhibit items to be displayed.

Fifth Floor Exhibit Space:



The fifth floor has art rails available for exhibits. The ceiling height of 11 ft. allows for installation with a ladder. The art rails are located in the East and West Galleries surrounding the fifth floor entrance to the Library's Auditorium. The gallery areas are also used as a pre-event space for event rentals, so availability of the space, and/or portions of the space, may be limited depending on other scheduled programming and activities.

EXHIBIT SPACES AT MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL LIBRARY

As shown on the diagram, there are seven (7) areas with art rails for display. The following photos show the seven areas as well as the approximate measurements.



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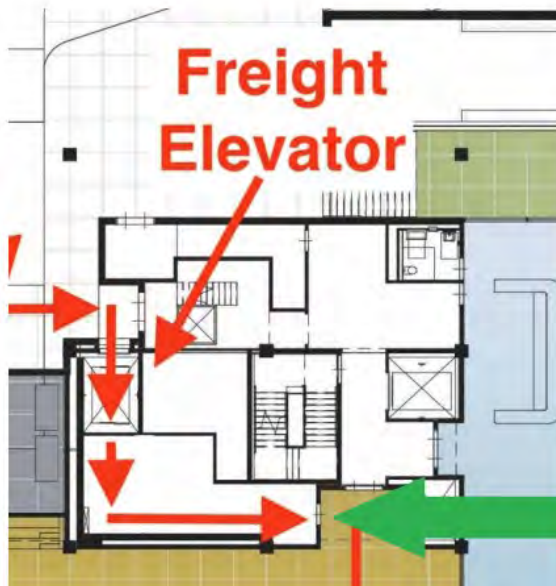
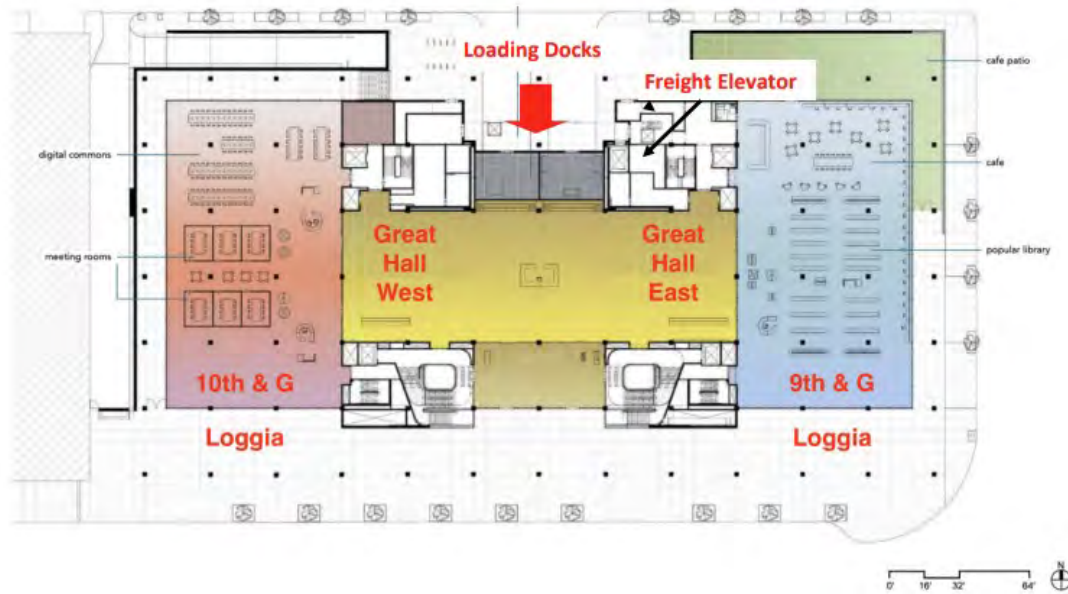
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