


**UTILITY BOX BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM  
GUIDELINES**



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**Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_   
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## **PURPOSE**

The Utility Box Beautification (UBB) program aims to enhance partnerships between community organizations, neighborhoods, and residents by incorporating beautification displays on Los Angeles County Public Works owned utility boxes. Public displays can enliven public right-of-way areas, inspire people, and improve communities' quality of life. This program aims to allow community members and individuals to become stewards of the displays on utility boxes in collaboration with Public Works.

The process is community-driven to allow neighborhoods to express their uniqueness and enhance their communities.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Support projects that contribute to the quality of life in the unincorporated communities of Los Angeles County.
- Support initiatives for public beautification displays that enhance communities, originate in the respective community, and are supported by community members.
- Facilitate public display projects on Public Works owned utility boxes.
- Comply with all public right-of-way policies and procedures.

Public Works may allow beautification displays to be applied to its utility boxes on a temporary basis under this program. The artist who designed the work must sign the waiver to alter/remove artwork (attached). A Road Encroachment permit from Public Works will be required to install displays painted on Public Works' owned utility boxes.

This guide outlines the considerations in developing a project, applicant requirements, and the application and review processes to obtain a Road Encroachment permit.

## **DEVELOPING A UTILITY BOX BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT**

Who may apply:

Individuals over 18 years of age, businesses, public agencies, community groups, and community organizations.

Which utility box can the applicant use:

The applicant must identify the specific location(s) of the utility box(es) of interest in the application. The applicant should include photographs and diagrams of the utility boxes. Public Works will review the proposed locations and advise applicants whether the utility box is eligible for decoration under the program. Please note some utility boxes may have an anti-graffiti coating and may not be suitable for painting. The applicant is responsible for verifying the suitability of the boxes for painting.

Who needs to be informed:

The applicant is responsible for reaching out to and obtaining support from community groups and/or private property owners in the vicinity of the utility box. The applicant will need to notify property owners via certified mail within a 500-foot radius of the utility box location and their intentions to beautify the utility box. The mailing should include a sketch of the proposed display, along with a letter that shows the following Public Works contact information for any concerns or questions:

- Telephone Number: (626) 979-5375
- E-mail Address: [csg@pw.lacounty.gov](mailto:csg@pw.lacounty.gov)

Public Works will provide the applicant with mailing addresses. Public Works must approve the content of the certified letters prior to mailing.

At the time of mailing, the applicant should also post a 2-foot by 3-foot poster with said notification and a sketch of the proposed display on the utility box for 2 weeks. In addition, the posting must include the telephone number and e-mail address for any questions or concerns. The applicant is responsible for notifying Public Works of the dates before posting.

What are the qualities of the display:

The applicant is responsible for the qualities of the display. The proposed display cannot include any of the following characteristics:

- Infringe upon a registered trademark, patent, or copyright
- Advertise for a financial benefit or commercial purpose
- Advertise for social functions, such as bazaars, carnivals, or functions hosted by private parties
- Resemble a traffic control device or regulatory sign
- Contain reflective material, mirrors, or causes a glare
- Campaign for specific legislation, individual politicians, political parties, ballot measures, political ideology, or the election or recall of a public official or anything of a political nature
- Promote violence, nudity, alcohol, cannabis, illegal drugs, or any illegal activity
- Portrays obscene, vulgar, profane, or scatological acts
- Denigrate a specific group based on ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, religion, gender, or sexual orientation
- Denigrate the military, law enforcement, fire rescue, government services, or public officials
- Denigrate animals or any creature protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act
- Defame any person, alive or deceased

What materials may the applicant use:

The permit application will require the applicant to identify and commit to the type of paint that will be used.

## **THE APPLICATION PROCESSES**

The application process for installation includes an application for utility box eligibility review and an application for a Road Encroachment permit.

### **I. Utility Box Eligibility Review**

The purpose of the eligibility review is to confirm the proposed utility box:

- Is available to the beautification program.
- Is not scheduled to be removed, replaced, or relocated in the near future.
- Is located in an unincorporated County community and is owned by Los Angeles County Public Works.

The applicant can submit proposed locations for review to Public Works Community Services Group at [csg@pw.lacounty.gov](mailto:csg@pw.lacounty.gov) or call (626) 979-5375 for any questions.

Once the proposed location is verified, the applicant will need to submit the following:

1. Proposed notification letter to property owners within a 500-foot radius of the utility box location notifying them of the proposed display.
2. Proposed posting notice for utility box and proposed dates for posting.
3. Any available support letters from community group(s) and adjacent property owner(s).

Once this information is received, the Community Services Group will provide mailing addresses for all property owners within a 500-foot radius of the proposed location. The applicant must send notifications via certified mail and provide the following:

- Receipts of the certified mail for each notification.

### **II. Road Encroachment Permit**

A Road Encroachment permit issued by Los Angeles County Public Works is required for all utility box display installations. The permittee shall comply with all requirements set forth in the County codes. Permit applications will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis in less than 4 weeks.

The applicant must submit an online application to Public Works through the County's Electronic Permitting and Inspections portal, EPIC-LA at:

<https://epicla.lacounty.gov/SelfService/Selfservice#/home>.

1. The applicant is responsible for processing and issuance fees associated with the permit process. Please refer to the fee schedule under Road Permit Fees using this link: <https://dpw.lacounty.gov/ldd/lddservices/roadReferences.shtml>. Up to three (3) Utility Box Beautification displays within a 1-mile radius may be included in the same Road Encroachment permit.
2. Applicants shall provide the following during the application process:
  - Utility box eligibility review approval
  - Signed waiver to Alter/Remove Artwork form
  - Signed Indemnification Waiver form (Permit/Volunteer Waiver)
  - Photos of the utility box location and pertinent existing roadway features
  - Display template showing all faces of the utility box, with proposed images
  - Details on materials used to paint the utility box
3. A complete Road Encroachment permit application must be received.
4. Upon completion of the display, the applicant must submit at least three (3) pictures showing the final display and work area.

## **INSTALLATION**

Public Works must be able to access the utility box and the components inside at all times. If the utility box is mounted on a base of concrete or other material, the base shall not be included for a public beautification display. The applicant is responsible for installing the beautification display under the following conditions:

- Follow all permit conditions for the installation of the display.
- The display may not restrict any vents or airflow through the utility box.
- Apply anti-graffiti coating approved by the County to abate vandalism.
- Display (paint or otherwise) must not cover/impact door seals, locks, police panels (door and locks), or vents.

- Avoid the use of dark colors over large areas of the utility box to lessen the potential for overheating.

Surface Preparation: Removal of all stickers, oil, grease, dirt, loose rust, and loose paint from all surfaces of the utility box are the applicant's responsibility prior to installing the temporary display. Removal methods must be approved by Public Works prior to the beginning of any work.

**The applicant may not under any circumstances use heat guns or heat lamps during the installation of the beautification display.**

## **MAINTENANCE**

The applicant may assume responsibility for maintenance, including but not limited to addressing vandalism, graffiti, environmental exposure, or dilapidation. Public Works is not responsible for maintaining the beautification display.

The eligibility review aims to minimize the likelihood of replacement, but it does not eliminate the possibility. The utility box may need to be replaced at any time, including boxes that are decorated under this program. Some reasons may be due to repairs, modifications, upgrades, vandalism, or damage. Public Works is not obligated to replace the display and no compensation will be provided.

New Utility Box Beautification permits may be considered at the same location 5 years after installation. A new eligibility review and Road Encroachment Permit will be needed for a new art display.