



Let's go. Out.

Grant Assistance Program for Downtown Events

The Downtown Alliance has created the *Let's go. Out.* grant assistance program for downtown events to expand the diversity, quality and frequency of downtown events.

Background

Offering a variety of public, outdoor events is an important part of creating a vibrant and inviting downtown. This program is built upon the basic principal that coordinated, strategic and inter-related promotions and events act together to strengthen the downtown. The expansion of event programming takes resources of organization, time and money. While the larger, legacy events that are established as part of the downtown calendar have these resources already in place, the development of new events specifically designed to benefit downtown establishments may need assistance.

The Downtown Alliance wishes to support events and promotions that will strengthen the arts, entertainment, hospitality and retail sectors of downtown, diversify the downtown event calendar, and invite people downtown by offering compelling, free events. To do so, the Downtown Alliance, in partnership with the DDA, has developed the *Let's go. Out.* program to offer financial and promotional support to new and emerging events and promotions.

The desired result is a coordinated offering of downtown events and promotions that:

- Provide a comprehensive and coordinated offering of quality events.
- Enhance the image of the downtown as a cultural destination.
- Expand the programming for Rosa Parks Circle.
- Celebrate the vibrancy and unique assets of the downtown.
- Engage and strengthen the downtown business community through their participation in events.
- Showcase the various experiences and neighborhoods of the downtown.
- Increase the frequency and/or length of visits to the downtown.
- Ensure diversity and distinctness in the events offered.
- Enliven public spaces at times when the spaces are ordinarily unused.

Assistance

The DDA/Downtown Alliance will provide:

1. Funds ranging from \$100-1000 per request and will be limited to reimbursement for actual expenses.
2. "Let's go. Downtown." graphic elements and standards for usage.
3. Listing of the event on the downtown website.

The applicant will provide:

1. Budget including expenses, revenues and funding sources
2. Proposal articulating the event/promotion

3. Clean up, security, planning, staffing and management of the event
4. Evaluation by the organizers following the event.

Requirements

Events sponsored through *Let's go. Out.* grant program will meet with following requirements:

- Events are free to attendees.
- Events are held within the DID boundaries.
- The event is not offensive, dangerous, political or religious in content.
- The benefit of the event is not limited to one business but is inclusive of a group of businesses.
- Staffing and management at the event is sufficient.
- Security is provided as needed, to be determined by the City of Grand Rapids.
- The event footprint and surrounding area is cleaned up immediately following the event.
- If the City of Grand Rapids requires insurance for the event, the Downtown Alliance will be listed as an also insured on the policy, and the policy will be given to the Downtown Alliance in advance of the event.
- The event will comply with all the rules of the City of Grand Rapids.
- The events will comply with the guidelines of the Merchants Council and/or meet with the Council in advance of the event.
- The event will use the downtown logo on their printed materials and recognize the Downtown Alliance as a sponsor with the media.

Events not complying with the basic requirements may lose their sponsorship.

In addition:

- If event series span more than one season, they can apply for two grants, one per season.
- Applicants should allow one month for the processing of the grants.
- All applications must be approved before the event.
- The committee reserves the right to decline any application.

Reimbursement

This is a reimbursement program, and the grant funds are the last money in. Checks will be cut after the event has taken place. For payment, the organizer will send an invoice to the Downtown Alliance and attach copies of paid invoices. The invoices must be for approved uses, as stated in the application.

Submittal and Timing

Please submit grant requests one month before the scheduled event to allow time for committee review and coordination with the Downtown Alliance Merchants Council. Please submit the application to events@downtowngr.org.

Proposals should outline planned events according to the form attached. Proposals will be evaluated based upon the evaluation criteria listed in this RFP. The proposals will be evaluated by the Downtown Alliance Events Committee.

Evaluation

Proposals submitted in response to the RFP will be evaluated based upon the quality of the proposal and the following strategies and requirements listed below:

1. Benefit to the downtown:

- The event/promotion creates a positive image of the downtown.
- The event will enhance the downtown's reputation as the center of art, culture, entertainment, dining, education, health and urban life.
- Downtown businesses will benefit from the event/promotion.
- The event/promotion is coordinated with the downtown marketing campaign and directs attendees to the downtown website (downtowngr.org).
- The event is located in the downtown district.

2. Ease and Ability of Production

- The organization coordinating the event has the capacity to carry out the event/promotion.
- The event is pedestrian friendly.
- All elements (security, promotion, staffing, clean up and organization) are managed by the event organizer.
- The funds provide by this program will leverage other funds and are used for costs that are incurred by the event.

3. Broad Popularity

- The event can be enjoyed by a variety of audiences and is not offensive or dangerous. Political and religious programming is not eligible.
- The event is open to the public and free of charge.

4. Coordination and Collaboration

- The event is coordinated with the City's Office of Film, Music and Special Events (ttofferi@grcity.us).
- The event collaborates with downtown businesses. Opportunities are created to encourage interaction between businesses and the event attendees. First priority for event participation is given to downtown businesses.
- For merchant promotions, participation is available to all merchant businesses within the defined district/group. The applying group is united by either:
 - geographic boundaries within the downtown
 - a common theme within the downtown (example: restaurants, retail)
- Special attention will be paid to efforts that collaborate with other initiatives and resources in the community and other downtown stakeholders.

5. Expansion and Diversity of the Downtown Event Calendar

- The event will assist in creating a vast menu of downtown programming and give people a new reason to come downtown that currently does not exist.
- The event will bring diverse clientele into the downtown or bring people into the downtown at a new time.

**Downtown Events and Promotion
Application Cover Sheet**



Event/Promotion Name _____

Date of Event _____

Business or Organization _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Contact Name _____

Email _____

On a separate page:

1. Please outline the proposed event.
2. Explain how your event will comply with the evaluation criteria, as described in the Request for Proposals.
 - a. Benefit to the Downtown
 - b. Ease and Ability of Production
 - c. Broad Popularity
 - d. Coordination and Collaboration
 - e. Expansion and Diversity of the Downtown Event Calendar
3. How will you measure success?
4. Attach the event budget, with expenses, income and sponsors identified.

Please submit both pages of the application to:

events@downtowngr.org
P.O. Box 230754, Grand Rapids, MI 49523

For more information:

Contact Nicole Weichelt at 771-0347 or at Nicole@downtowngr.org.

**Downtown Events and Promotion
Event Evaluation Form**



Event/Promotion Name _____

Date of Event _____

Contact Name _____ Email _____

Description of event including attendance:

Do you consider the event to have been a success?

Did the event benefit the downtown and diversify the events calendar?

Did it collaborate with downtown businesses? If so, please list.

Were there any successes you would like to share? Any problems that occurred?

How did you promote the event and was the Downtown Alliance included?

Please complete and submit this form to: Nicole@downtowngr.org.