

# **Downtown Lansing Inc.'s Creative Places District Transformation Grant Program**

Guidelines and Application  
2018-19

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## **DISTRICT TRANSFORMATION GRANT GUIDELINES**

DLI's Creative Places program is an essential tool cultivating improvements in the Lansing Principal Shopping District, which calls for focusing commercial activity, marketing efforts, redevelopment and investment in traditional commercial districts and neighborhoods. The Creative Places program seeks to enhance the vitality and prosperity of traditional commercial districts and neighborhoods to help boost economic activity, create jobs, and attract new investment.

The core mission of the Creative Places program is to stimulate private investment in designated commercial districts by directly engaging individuals and groups within the community and jointly investing in transformational improvements. Public-private partnerships can improve the vitality of traditional commercial districts and neighborhoods, bolster prosperity, create new opportunities for local businesses, and set the stage for future private investment that helps local communities and businesses reach their full potential. As districts mature into successful commercial centers, their strong economic performance will continue to stimulate a virtuous cycle of improvement.

Creative Places district grants are offered by Downtown Lansing Inc. to provide support to locally-driven initiatives and projects. DLI will consider a wide range of potential grant investments, such as programs that provide training to businesses, campaigns to recruit new entrepreneurs, efforts to attract customers to the district, or art initiatives that enliven public places.

### **WHO CAN APPLY?**

Individuals, businesses, property owners, district or neighborhood associations, chambers of commerce, arts organizations, and community groups with nonprofit or other tax-exempt status may apply for grants to support projects in District B of the Lansing Principal Shopping District as defined on page 4.

District transformation grants are intended to support community-driven initiatives. Applications may feature multiple partners committed to realizing a project that will benefit the broader district. Partnerships can maximize inclusiveness and lead to creative approaches that address multiple social, economic and physical needs of the district. Project proposals must be able to demonstrate broad community support for implementing the proposed concept.

### **HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?**

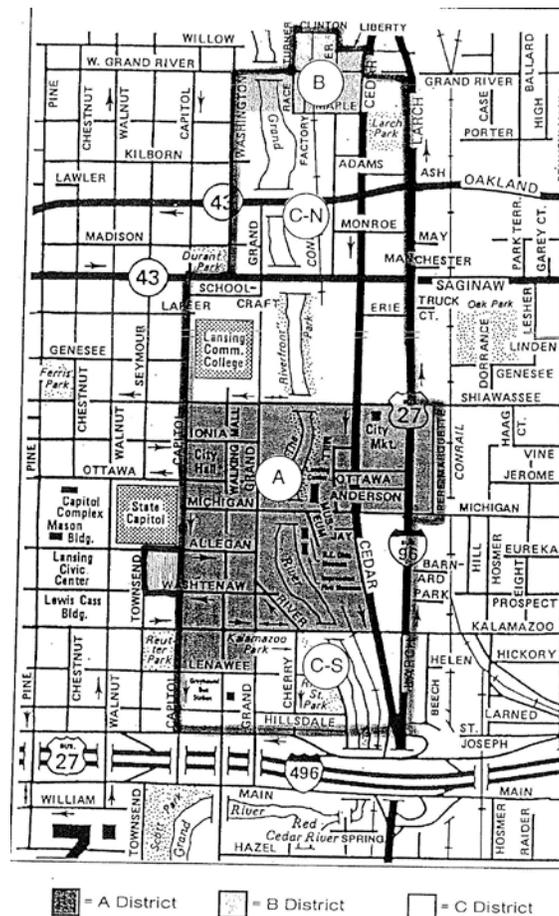
Downtown Lansing Inc. has targeted up to \$22,000 annually to support the Creative Places Grant Program. The maximum amount of grant funds awarded for any one project will be \$10,000.

### **STAFF CONTACT**

For more information please contact Mindy Biladeau, Executive Director at 517-485-3357 or [mindy@downtownlansing.org](mailto:mindy@downtownlansing.org).

## AREAS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR DISTRICT TRANSFORMATION GRANTS

District B of the Lansing Principal Shopping District. District B means the area of the Principal Shopping District, commonly known as "Lansing's Old Town," with the following boundary: Beginning at the intersection of west right-of-way line of N. Washington Avenue and the north right-of-way line of W. Grand River Avenue (the "Point of Beginning - B"), proceeding east along the W. Grand River right-of-way line to the west right of-way line of Turner Street, north along the Turner Street right-of-way line to the north right-of-way line of Clinton Street, east along the Clinton Street right-of-way line to the east right-of-way line of Center Street, south along the Center Street right-of-way line to the north right-of-way line of Liberty Street, east along the Liberty Street right-of-way line to the center, line of N. Cedar Street, south along the N. Cedar Street center line to the center line of E. Maple Street, west along E. Maple Street center line (as aligned) to the west right-of-way line of N. Washington Avenue, north along the N. Washington Avenue right-of-way line to the point of beginning - B.



## **MINIMUM GRANT REQUIREMENTS**

- Projects must take place within District B of the Lansing Principal Shopping District.
- Projects must address at least three of the Creative Places district transformation project investment criteria (outlined below).
- Projects must be completed within 12 months of grant award date.
- Projects must be clearly achievable given proposed resources and personnel.
- Projects must have a designated fiscal sponsor that will be responsible for proper use, accounting and reporting for all grant funds. If the main applicant is not eligible to serve as fiscal sponsor, the applicant must identify a project partner who will serve in this capacity.
- While matching funds are not a requirement to receive a grant, applications that include matching funding and/or in-kind donations from other sources will receive a more favorable review.

## **PROJECT INVESTMENT CRITERIA**

To qualify for funding, all projects must clearly satisfy three or more of the following district transformation grant investment criteria:

- Potential to significantly enhance district appearance, ambience, and character
- Improves availability of ground floor retail services and amenities in the district
- Provides important outreach or training opportunity to key district stakeholders that contribute to revitalization
- Provides an innovative event, activity, or destination that is an attractor for the district
- Improves or facilitates placemaking, revitalization and local identity
- Attracts investment, creates jobs and strengthens local tax base
- Removes or addresses a significant existing blight or challenge within the district
- Potential to restore historic structures or urban form
- Leverages contributions from other entities

## **RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF FUNDS**

District transformation grant funds may not be used for any of the following purposes:

- Activities or events held outside of District B of the Lansing Principal Shopping District
- Costs that may be incurred in preparing this grant application
- General organizational support, annual appeals or fund drives
- Direct grants or loans that primarily benefit specific individuals or businesses

## CREATIVE PLACES GRANT APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

### APPLICATION FORM INSTRUCTIONS

The application form begins on page 6. Please provide organization, project and contact information using the application form. The remaining narrative sections B-E of the application should be written on 8½ x 11" paper, with one-inch margins, double-sided printing, and with a font size no smaller than 11 point. Concise writing is encouraged; it is **not** necessary to use the full allowance of pages if project details can be effectively conveyed in a brief narrative.

Please submit all information in the order listed in the attached forms. The completed application must not exceed eight pages, including the application form. Additional attachments as described in section E must also be included, but are not counted as part of the eight page limit.

### APPLICATION SUBMITTAL AND DEADLINES

Applications are due by **December 28, 2018** and will be reviewed in January. Grant awards will be made starting in late January/February 2019.

Digital submission of materials is preferred. Please package the application into one file. Submit one PDF version. Email the documents to: [mindy@downtownlansing.org](mailto:mindy@downtownlansing.org). A confirmation email will be sent when the application is received. If you do not receive a confirmation, please contact Mindy Biladeau at 517-485-3357.

To submit a paper application, produce one double-sided document, secured using a paper clip in the upper left hand corner only. Submit one copy to: Mindy Biladeau, Executive Director, Downtown Lansing Inc. 401 S. Washington Sq. Ste. 101 Lansing, MI 48933.

### APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS AND TIMELINE

DLI staff will review each application for consistency with the program mission. Applications that are determined to meet the goals of the Creative Places program will be reviewed by the Downtown Lansing Inc. Board of Directors. Applications will be reviewed in January.

The DLI Board of Directors will use the application as the primary basis to determine funding eligibility. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure their project is sufficiently defined according to the guidelines so that the board can efficiently review the application. Applications will be evaluated based on the information submitted, responsiveness to the program's purpose and goals, program investment criteria, and the board's professional and collective judgment. Grants are awarded annually, subject to availability of funds.

The Creative Places Program has targeted up to \$22,000 annually to support district transformation projects.

DLI will inform applicants if the grant application was successful. Upon request, information about other funding sources or suggestions for strengthening an application for a subsequent funding cycle may be provided.

## CREATIVE PLACES: DISTRICT TRANSFORMATION GRANT APPLICATION

### A. Project, organization, and contact information (one page maximum)

Please provide the general information requested below using the format provided.

<b>Date of Application</b>	
<b>Project Title</b>	
<b>Project Summary</b> Provide a 20 to 40 word summary that describes your project	
<b>Project Goal</b>	
<b>Organization/Applicant Name</b>	
<b>Primary Project Contact</b> Name  Title  Phone  Email  Street Address	
<b>Project Partners</b> List all committed project partners	
<b>Fiscal Sponsor Funding</b>	Grant Amount Requested: \$  Total Project budget: \$

## **B. Project narrative** (two pages maximum)

The project description should make a convincing case that the application meets the intent of the grant program. Information should be presented clearly and concisely. What is the main intent of your project, and how will it be implemented? How will this project help to transform and revitalize the district? How will it improve conditions for local small businesses? What specific benefits do you anticipate?

Be sure to specify in your narrative how the project meets the District Transformation grant program's investment criteria (see page 5). Also include at least two letters of support for the project from local stakeholders within the designated eligible district.

## **C. Anticipated project outcomes** (one page maximum)

Please provide clear quantitative and/or qualitative outcomes to be reported in the final project evaluation report to be submitted to DLI at the conclusion of the project. Describe what will be accomplished and documented at the end of the project. What will you measure to illustrate the effectiveness and transformational impact of your project? What success stories do you expect to tell about your project's impact?

## **D. Project timeline and key milestones** (one page maximum)

Describe the major phases of the project, the time allotted to each phase (for example, weeks 2-4) and how the team plans to deploy the grant resources as well as matching resources and/or volunteer time to execute the project on schedule.

## **E. Organizational structure and team preparedness** (one page maximum)

Detail the team's experience and capacity to conduct the project. Fully describe professional skills and training that will be relied upon to execute the project, and the relevant background of team members or professional contractors enlisted to help execute the project. Confirm the approval from the governing body, or management of the organization and/or permission by any property owners whose property will be involved.

## F. Project Budget Worksheet and Narrative (two pages maximum)

Please describe the project budget and complete the budget chart below. Be as specific as possible.

### BUDGET NARRATIVE

Please describe the project budget, including revenues and expenditures. Explain how budget figures were derived; describe cost of professional services (name of individual or company, rate, # of hours, etc.) and any other relevant information. Describe matching sources by listing contributors and amounts. Note that matching resources are not a requirement, but will result in a more favorable ranking of the application. Please also note that while it is permissible to use up to 10 percent of grant funds for overhead expenses, applications that do not use grant funds for overhead will be ranked more favorably.

### BUDGET CHART

Activity	DLI funds requested	Other funds or contributions	Combined Project Budget
<b>Professional services</b> List activities, rates and amounts			
<b>Equipment, materials &amp; supplies</b> List items, quantities, prices			
<b>Promotional costs &amp; printing</b> List items, quantities, prices			
<b>Permitting &amp; fees</b> Please itemize			
<b>Indirect or overhead costs<sup>1</sup></b> e.g., utilities, rent, telephone, fiscal administration			
<b>Other</b> Please describe			
<b>Total</b>			

<sup>1</sup> Only for expenses directly related to project. Costs are reimbursable up to 10 percent of total grant award

## G. Attachments

**Please attach the following required documents.**

Organization 501(c)(3) IRS determination letter, if applicant is not a school or government agency, or the following 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status statement:

“I certify that the above information is correct and that I am authorized by the governing board of this organization to submit this grant application to Downtown Lansing Inc. Further, I certify that this organization is in good standing with the IRS, retains its official 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, and is classified as a public charity and *not* a private foundation OR qualifies for exempt status as a public school, government agency, or religious institution.” *Signed by the executive director or board member.*

- Letter stating permission to use property by land owner or manager (if applicable)
- Letter of support from each project partner listed
- Letters of support from district stakeholders (minimum two letters)

**The following additional materials may also be attached if appropriate.**

- Images and/or maps that document the project need or location
- Resumes of key team members

## CONTRACTING AND GRANT AGREEMENTS

If DLI approves funding, DLI staff will work with the grant recipient ("grantee") to enter into the necessary agreements for the project between DLI and the grantee. The applicant will have up to 12 months from the time these agreements are signed to complete the project. Projects will be funded in two parts 50% at time of signed agreement and 50% upon completion of the project. If special circumstances warrant, DLI may, at its sole discretion, make arrangements to disburse funding at key program milestones. The requirements and obligations of the grantee will be spelled out in the grant agreement. Once a reimbursement request is complete, DLI will pay within 30 days.

Grant recipients who receive funding shall enter into a contractual agreement with DLI that specifies legal and contractual obligations, including insurance requirements and the use of a fiscal agent. Certain types of revitalization projects involving the public or locations accessed by the public may require liability insurance on the part of the grantee. Appropriate insurance coverage levels for each project will be considered at the time of grant award, and coverage of grantee will be reviewed prior to entering into a grant agreement.

Grant projects are subject to DLI audits and reviews. DLI shall be acknowledged as grant sponsors on any written or published material, grant product and/or project signage.

Grantee must be making reasonable progress toward the project milestones and objectives within the first three months of award. A final evaluation report and final budget report will be due upon project completion. DLI shall receive any grant products including but not limited to curriculum, videos, guides and brochures upon request.

## **ABOUT Downtown Lansing Inc.**

Downtown Lansing Inc. is dedicated to making Lansing a place where people want to be, by encouraging its businesses, neighborhoods, and stakeholders to build a dynamic culture known for its vibrancy, sustainable growth, and business friendly environment.

**Creative Places** invests to build and grow thriving traditional commercial districts and neighborhoods. DLI grants leverage local investments to make great places that endure for generations to come.

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[www.downtownlansing.org](http://www.downtownlansing.org)