

Downtown Events and Promotion Assistance Program



Summary

The Downtown Alliance and DDA want to showcase the vibrancy and variety of experiences a visitor can have in downtown Grand Rapids and develop new events and promotions that will benefit downtown establishments.

There are many ways to develop an environment where events will flourish. Some will take nothing more than basic coordination. Others need more assistance to succeed. This program is provided to assist those events that need support.

The Downtown Alliance, with support from the DDA, has developed this program to offer financial and promotional support to new and emerging events and promotions. Requests/proposals from downtown organizations will be accepted on a quarterly basis, and reviewed according to the evaluation criteria in this document.

Background

Through the past decade, downtown Grand Rapids has emerged as the center of culture, entertainment and dining in West Michigan and has become the premier destination for visitors and residents seeking a cultural, urban experience. We have worked to create a welcoming environment that is a gathering place for people of all ages and interests.

Offering a variety of public, outdoor events is an important part of creating a strong 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 Downtown Alliance and DDA believe 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.

Downtown organizations and businesses are uniquely qualified to provide these services and ensure that the events benefit the downtown and the downtown marketplace. Several promotions already exist that focus on a particular sector or experience of the downtown. This RFP is designed to strengthen existing events and encourage new ones.

The Downtown Alliance and DDA wish to support events and promotions that will strengthen the arts, entertainment, hospitality and retail sectors of downtown. The desired result is a coordinated offering of downtown events and promotions that:

- Provide a comprehensive and coordinated offering of events and promotions.

- 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 the downtown community through their participation in events.
- Strengthen downtown businesses.
- 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.
- Draw targeted audiences into downtown businesses and arts venues.
- 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. Announcement of the event to the downtown businesses through email.
4. Listing of the event on the downtown website.

The applicant will provide:

1. Budget including expenses, revenues and funding sources
2. Application describing the event/promotion
3. Clean up, security, planning, staffing and management of the event
4. Recap of the event per the form attached including a description of the event, the planner's evaluation of the event, and recommendations for a future event.

Eligibility

Events must be located in the downtown, as defined by the DID, attachment A, and meet the evaluation criteria included in this document.

Requirements

Funded events/promotions will be required to work with downtown businesses through the Downtown Alliance Merchants Council. They will make every effort to comply with the Merchants Council's event guidelines.

The participating event/promotion will be required to use the downtown logo and marketing elements in their printed materials, with the Downtown Alliance having approval on placement and size. Downtown banners will be supplied to be displayed at the events.

Evaluation

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

1. Benefit to the downtown:

- There is a direct benefit to downtown businesses, as defined in the application.
- 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.
- 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 general organizational 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 is new or emerging.
- 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.

Submittal and Timing

The Downtown Alliance will accept and review applications from organizations for events and promotions assistance on a regular basis. Please allow one month for normal processing. The Downtown Alliance retains the right to reject any and all proposals.

Please submit the application to: Downtown Alliance Events Assistance Program, PO Box 230754, Grand Rapids, MI 49523 or 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 by a subcommittee of the Downtown Alliance Merchants Council and the Downtown Alliance Events Committee.

Downtown Events and Promotion Application Cover Sheet



Event/Promotion Name _____

Date of Event _____

Location 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.

Submit the application to:

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

For more information:

Contact Events@downtowngr.org.

Please allow one month for processing of the request. The Downtown Alliance retains the right to reject any and all proposals.

**Downtown Events and Promotion
Event Evaluation Form**



Event/Promotion Name _____

Date of Event _____

Business or Organization _____

Contact Name _____

Was the event successful? Please define. _____

Was the event beneficial for the downtown? Please define. _____

Did downtown businesses participate in the event?

How did the event comply with the evaluation criteria?

Please return this form to:

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

