
Kara Bolt 2026
DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC
ACTIVATE
GRANTS
SPRING/SUMMER 2027
Funding Projects up to $10,000
Applications Due: January 10, 2027

About Downtown Grand Rapids Inc

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc (DGRI) is the organization responsible for city building and place-management in the urban core of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

DGRI actively engages more than 100 unique individuals from metro Grand Rapids in the decision-making flow of the organization's fiduciary boards, advisory alliance and project steering committees. This robust leadership network ensures DGRI continually brings together people with different knowledge, perspective and experience to solve problems, identify opportunities and directly support the day-to-day work of improving Grand Rapids' Downtown neighborhoods.

For more information please visit - downtowngr.org

Activate Grants

Funding Projects up to $10,000 each
Applications Due: January 10, 2027 at 11:59 PM EST

DGRI offers grant support for activating public spaces to culturally enhance our community. The purpose of this grant is to engage the community and identify positive ways to be creative with inactive Downtown spaces.

DGRI is seeking proposals for activations (artworks, events, murals, etc.) that will be hosted in Downtown Grand Rapids in 2027. Any space Downtown can be a source of inspiration and a place for activation with permission from the property owner(s). Proposals that utilize dormant, underutilized spaces will be given preference. It is the responsibility of the grant applicant to find a feasible location for their proposal. Proposals that incorporate interactive elements and engagement are encouraged.

Proposed activations must be suitable for all audiences, accessible for all abilities and open to the public free of cost. Any proposed activations on publicly-owned property requires approval by the Grand Rapids Arts Advisory Council.

Types of Site Activation

This application is open to any medium or form of activation. This could include, but is not limited to, site specific installation, sculpture, alley activations, events, performance, projection, murals and multimedia.

Please see the end of the application for examples of successful past work, and ideas for a strong proposal.

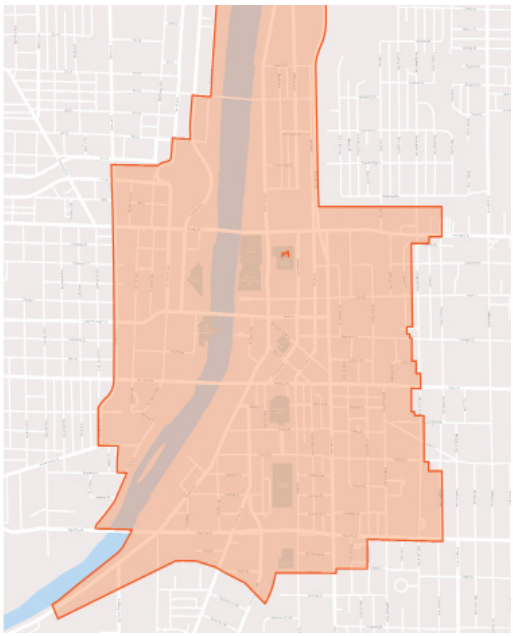
Location

The applicant may propose a specific location within DGRI's boundary or multiple locations that might be suitable for the proposed work. There are some suggested locations at the end of this document to help inspire and provide some ideas.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to gain approval from the owner of the location. If the location is on public property DGRI will assist the applicant with the process, but it is ultimately the applicant's responsibility.

When applying for a mural it is encouraged to have pre-approval from the owner.

We encourage applicants to think beyond parks and commonly activated public spaces. Applicants who seek to engage and activate underutilized spaces will be given priority. Please spend some time Downtown discovering the right location for your activation.



ALL PROPOSALS FOR GRANT IMPLEMENTATIONS MUST BE WITHIN THE DGRI BOUNDARIES.

Insurance

Artists are responsible for their own insurance. It is mandatory for you to carry General Liability, please plan to budget accordingly. If your project involves an event you may also be required to carry specific insurance.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be at least 18 years old
- Applicants must be in good standing with DGRI
- All activations must be free and open to the public
- Applicants must be from the greater Grand Rapids area

Budget

Artists may request funding for up to $10,000. The funding may be used for anything relating to the project such as materials, travel, engineering, machinery, insurance, artist stipend, etc. Selected applicants will be paid 50% up front, and 50% upon completion of the project.

When budgeting, applicants should consider including safety materials as well, such as cord covers and anything else needed to maintain a safe environment around the work.

Tip: Smaller activations can be just as impactful as larger ones! If a smaller activation aligns better with your time, budget, or interests, feel free to choose that option.

Selection Process

A selection committee comprised of community members and stakeholders will review each application and provide recommendations for funding.

Applications will be evaluated based on the submitted application materials, how well a proposed project activates its space, community engagement and merit. Following selection committee recommendation, DGRI will contact selected applicants. Funding is limited and highly competitive. Proposals for grant funding that are political or religious in any way will not be considered.

Schedule

November 2026 : Applications open
December 8, 2026: Activate Grant Virtual Q&A at 12:00PM
January 1, 2027: Deadline for questions submitted to kmoore@downtowngr.org by 11:59 PM EST
January 10, 2027: Applications deadline by 11:59 PM EST
February 19, 2027: Applicants notified
April - June 2027: Installation plans & schedule finalized, permits obtained from the City of Grand Rapids if needed
May - August 2027: Installation period
Fall 2027: Projects completed and removed if applicable

DGRI may revise the schedule at any time in the process. Changes will be communicated to applicants.



Considerations

- Projects that are interactive will be given greater consideration. Please consider how the public will be able to interactive with the proposed artwork.
- If your proposal is part of another event, please consider elaborating how this grant will benefit the community outside the dates of the event.
- Every project on city owned property must be approved by the Grand Rapids Arts Advisory Committee. DGRI will work with you to prepare materials for this.

- All proposed projects should be accessible.
- Projects should promote and amplify a diverse and inclusive representation of the many cultural and ethnic backgrounds of our City.
- In exchange for, and as consideration for, any discretionary grant money awarded to an applicant, DGRI may use and display images of the Installation/Event for DGRI-related purposes, including advertising, educational and promotional materials and multimedia publicity in support of promotion of DGRI projects and initiatives.
- DGRI is a 501c(3) organization and does not sell or profit from any imagery, photography or videography of any proposed activation.

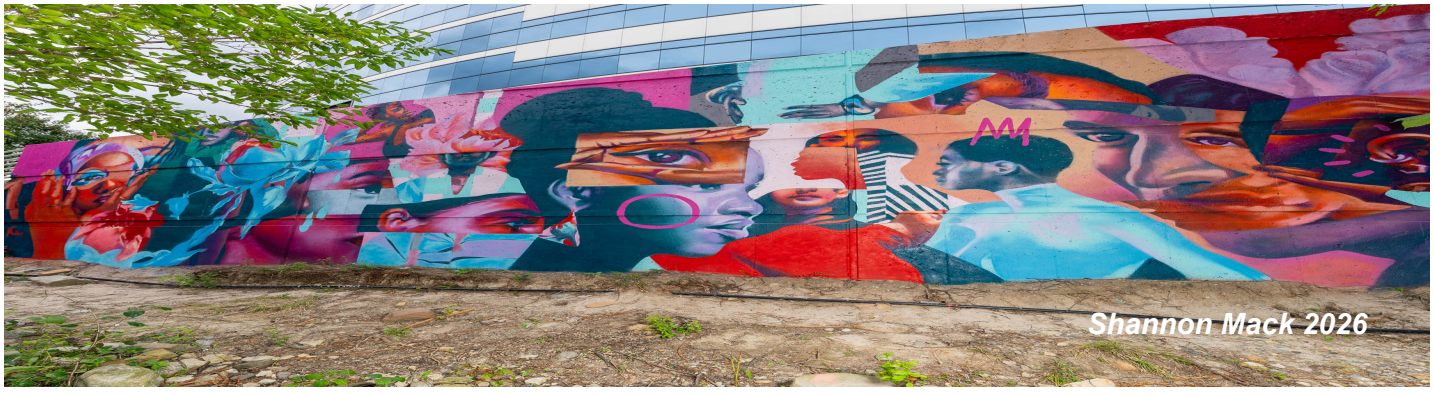
Opportunities to Learn More

DGRI is offering the following opportunities for interested applicants to learn more about Activation Grants and public artwork.

Activate Grant Virtual Q&A
DGRI's Activation Manager, Katie Moore, will walk through the application materials and answer audience questions about the grant. You can find a past recording **here**.

December 8, 2026, 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Facebook Live

Activate Grant 1:1 Meetings
If you have an idea that you would like to get feedback on please email Katie at kmoore@downtowngr.org to set up a phone call or virtual meeting.



How to Submit a Proposal

Please submit the following information by January 10, 2027. File names should include artists' first and last name. Dropbox link can be found here.

A single PDF document containing all the required information is preferred, as it ensures we receive your complete application materials efficiently. You must submit application via Dropbox.

1. Please complete this short questionnaire. *This does not need to be emailed or added to Dropbox.*
2. Resume or CV that includes relative experience.
3. Your website or social media that represents similar projects. If you don't have either please provide at least (5) images or videos of similar previous projects.
4. Proposed location(s) for project. You can find a list of locations at the end of this document or propose a new location.
5. Detailed physical and conceptual description of proposed artwork. This should also include a description of materials being used, any programming involved, maintenance plan and any other information you feel would be helpful for the review committee. If your installation has interactive components please explain.
6. Renderings and/or images of proposed project.
7. Site-map of proposed installation/project.
8. Estimated budget including a breakdown of costs. Keep in mind DGRI pays 1/2 up front and 1/2 after the project is complete.
9. Although using AI as a tool is permitted, it is preferable that most of the application is composed by the applicant.

Questions?

If you have any questions concerning your application, ideas, potential locations, etc., please reach out to Katie Moore: kmoore@downtowngr.org.



Activate Grant - Potential 2027 Locations

With permission from the property owner, any location in the DGRI boundary can be a potential location for an activation. These are suggestions but we encourage you to spend some time Downtown and find inspiration.



555 Monroe
555 Monroe NW



Riverwalk
Grand Rapids Public Museum



Civic Auditorium Projection
Lyon Square



Grand Rapids Sister Cities Plaza
230 Pearl St. NW



Vacant Storefronts
Various Locations



Sixth Street Park
647 Monroe Ave. NW



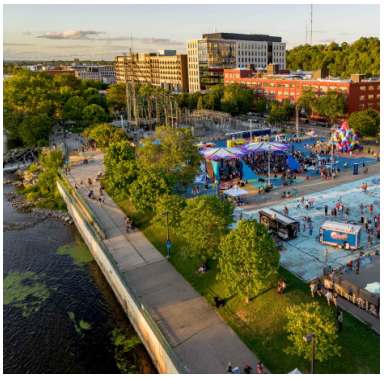
The Blue Bridge



Corner of Cherry & S Curve
(Behind Studio Park)



DeVos Place
303 Monroe Ave. NW



Riverwalk



Van Andel Alley
130 Fulton St. W



Gillett Bridge



Parking Ramps



Van Andel Plaza
130 Fulton St. W



Calder Plaza
300 Monroe Ave. NW



Alleyways



Studio Park Alley
123 Ionia Ave. SW



Studio Park Piazza
123 Ionia Ave. SW



Five Points
762 Midtown Arcade



Pekich Park
9 Cherry St. SW



Green Space
300 Monroe Ave. NW



Green Space
Public Museum Parking Ramp



Fish Ladder Park
606 Front Ave. NW



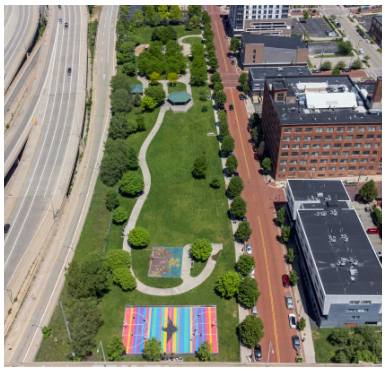
Seating Area
133 Cesar E. Chavez Ave. SW



Ah-Nab-Awen Park Pavillion



Lacks Park
60 Front Ave NW



Heartside Park
301 Ionia Ave. SW



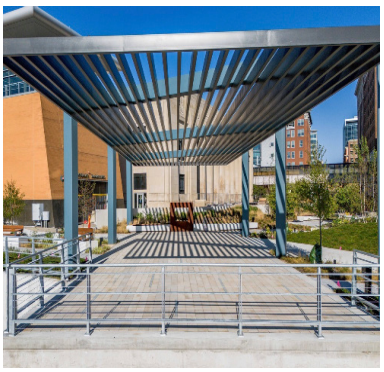
Crescent Park
301 Bostwick Ave. NE



Monroe Center
Between Ottawa & Monroe



Gerald R. Ford Museum Plaza
303 Pearl St NW



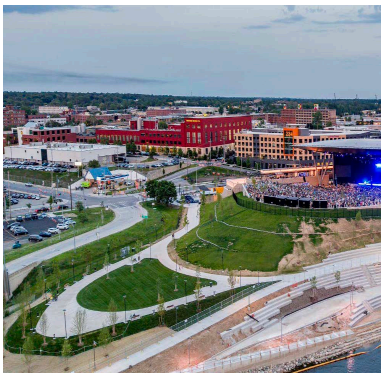
Lyon Square
296 Lyon St NW



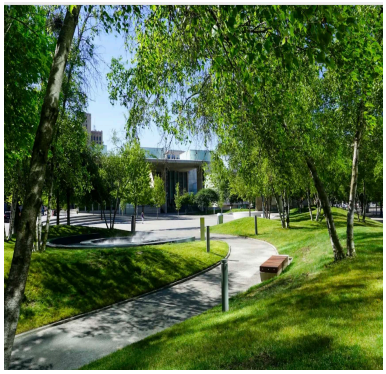
Field & Fire Lot
820 Monroe Ave NW



Canal Park
941 Monroe Ave NW



Pocket Park
Acrisure Amphitheater



Green Space
Rosa Parks Circle

?

Unknown Locations

