



DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPORT FOR DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS, MI

Deadline:

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. will receive proposals on a rolling basis

Deliver to:

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.
Attention: Annamarie Buller and Tim Kelly
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Request for Proposals

Funds available for creative initiatives to help Downtown Grand Rapids grow and secure the neighborhood's overall supply of "affordable" housing.

Background

The City of Grand Rapids and the Downtown community are deeply committed to maintaining and expanding a broad range of housing choices, with a particular emphasis on "affordable" housing for low-wage earners. The GR Forward strategy, an investment guide for Downtown and a 2015 amendment to the City Master Plan, established the goal of maintaining 30% of the Downtown housing supply for those earning below 120% of area median income.

Downtown currently tracks with this housing goal. Currently 34% of the 4,579 housing units are income restricted and help low income renters find affordable housing. Indeed, the neighborhood today enjoys the highest concentration of "affordable" housing stock in the greater Grand Rapids area.

The challenge is maintaining and growing the supply. Home to two major medical campuses, a dozen colleges/universities, a growing number of jobs, the regional transit hub and an increasingly vibrant entertainment scene, Downtown is an increasingly attractive residential neighborhood.

What's more, major plans for investment and continued growth are on the horizon. The restoration of the Grand River as a signature public amenity is one particular project anticipated to significantly elevate the neighborhood's quality of life and, among many welcome benefits, also increase the competition for housing.

Ensuring Downtown Grand Rapids proactively maintains a robust supply of "affordable" housing for workers, students, seniors and others - commensurate with the GR Forward housing goal - is a top community priority.

Funds Available

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. (DGRI) administers the Grand Rapids Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The DDA has funds available up to \$250,000 to support creative solutions that advance on Downtown's "affordable" housing goal. These funds are available through local increment tax capture by the DDA. As such funds are subject to geographic limitations, use restrictions and payment availability as established by Part 2 of PA 57 of 2018 (formerly PA 197 of 1975) and other policies established by the Grand Rapids DDA Board. See supporting documentation attached.

Potential Use of Funds

This process is open to ideas and initiatives that support and bring about innovation in “affordable” housing. The purpose of this RFP is to identify creative strategies and projects that effectively and measurably advance on the community’s goal of growing and maintaining “affordable” housing choices in Downtown.

Below are examples of situational uses eligible and not eligible for funding. These lists are meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive. DGRI staff is available to help potential applicants determine the eligibility of proposed uses not listed below. Given the complexity of ways in which tax increment funds can and cannot be used, potential applicants are strongly encouraged to involve DGRI staff in the review of potential proposals prior to submission.

Potential ideas for the use of DDA funds may include, but are not limited to:

- Conducting original research that further defines Downtown’s affordable housing challenges and opportunities
- Developing a viable economic model for the construction and operation of Downtown multi-family affordable housing
- Planning and proposing the construction and operation by the DDA of a multi-family affordable housing project

Examples of uses not eligible for DDA funding:

- Marketing specific individual housing projects
- Paying individual rents
- Staff and administrative fees for housing projects
- Construction of privately-owned affordable housing

Proposal Requirements

Proposals submitted shall be limited to 6 pages (or 12 double-sided pages, including cover and back page). The proposal should include the following:

- Description of approach--- A summary of your venture and how it will achieve the community goals.
- Relevant experience--- A description of your previous experience and qualifications on similar ventures.

- Team--- Description of the individuals working on this project and their role in the work. This could include other partnering organizations or funders.
- Schedule--- Overview of timeline and important project milestones to ensure measurable movement towards the community goal.
- Measurability---Description of how the project process and results will be measured and documented to rate success and establish potential further replication and adaptation.
- Project costs--- An outline of proposed costs, professional fees or other expenses required to complete the proposed approach.

Evaluation Factors

DGRI and the GR Forward Goal 2 Alliance will evaluate responses to this RFP based on several key factors including:

- The location proposed is within the DDA boundaries.
- The use of the funds is consistent with PA 57 state-statute, which empowers the Downtown Development Authority to fund Affordable Housing in Downtown Grand Rapids.
- Alignment with the aforementioned community goals defined in GR Forward.
- Creativity and development of proposed solution.
- Applicants relevant past performance/experience.
- Speed of implementation.
- Potential for success.
- Sustainability and replicability.
- Clear articulation of expected outcomes.
- Documentation of process and measurability of outcomes.

Timeline

DGRI invites applications on a rolling basis and will review proposals with the support of DGRI staff, the GR Forward Goal 2 Alliance and the DDA Board.