

## DOWNTOWN ENHANCEMENT GRANT

A public realm enhancement initiative

### Program Purpose:

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc (DGRI) seeks to enhance and improve Downtown streetscapes, sidewalks and related public realm elements to promote increased vibrancy, walkability and accessibility. For other grants related to new businesses or additional funding, please look at the DGRI business support grants website page: [Business Grants | Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.](#)

### Available funding:

Approved projects are eligible for reimbursement of up to 50 percent of project costs for eligible project elements (i.e. “public realm enhancements”). Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis as annual funding remains available.

DGRI reserves the right to deny any application for funding.

### Project evaluation:

Any project located in the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) boundary is eligible for the Downtown Enhancement Grant. Submitted applications will be evaluated to determine their ability to advance the goals of GR Forward, with a specific focus on public realm enhancements. The DDA will fund enhancements beyond what is required by the City of Grand Rapids, and which are deemed to be publicly owned, including but not limited to those elements outlined below:

- Entranceway accessibility improvements and other accessibility enhancements
- Façade lighting
- Pedestrian lighting
- Outdoor dining area
- Street trees and planters
- Street furniture and other streetscape elements

The approval of a project will be at the sole discretion of the DGRI team and/or the DDA Board. On an annual basis, DGRI will review the program guidelines to determine if changes are required to meet the ever-evolving needs of Downtown.

For more information: [www.downtowngr.org](http://www.downtowngr.org) Contact: [cmathein@downtowngr.org](mailto:cmathein@downtowngr.org)

August 2025

## Requirements and Eligibility:

- Projects must be located in the DDA Boundary.
- Funds may only be used to reimburse enhancements to the public realm, as defined by PA 197.
- Project elements for which an applicant is seeking reimbursement must not have commenced construction at the time of application.
- Project shall not have received previous funding from DDA; however, a building or site may be eligible for multiple grants.
- Projects receiving funding from the DDA's Development Support Program are not eligible.
- Non-profits and higher learning institutions are generally not eligible; however, the DDA Board may choose to support a project at their sole discretion.
- Applicants must be up to date on City of Grand Rapids taxes or other City fees and charges prior to receiving reimbursement.
- Funding shall be allocated per project, and there may be multiple projects per property.

## Required steps to apply:

**Step 1:** Interested applicants are to contact Corey Mathein ([cmathein@downtowngr.org](mailto:cmathein@downtowngr.org)) to gather information about the grant.

**Step 2:** Set up a meeting to discuss the proposed project, its eligibility and its competitiveness. It is highly encouraged to do a site visit to help visualize the project.

**Step 3:** work on the application by including the invoices/payments for the proposed project, including photos of the finished work (before and after photos would be ideal).

**Step 4:** Apply for an Oracle number if you do not have one or a VSS number (this is required in order to receive your potential reimbursement). [Register as a Vendor/Supplier](#)

Applications are accepted until annual budget for the grant runs out. Applications are reviewed within 5 business days of receipt.

Projects seeking \$15000 or less in reimbursement may be approved by DGRI staff and will typically take 2 – 4 weeks to authorize once a complete application is submitted.

Projects seeking more than \$15000 in reimbursement must be approved by the DDA Board and will typically take 2 months to authorize once submitted.

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Paper applications are also available at the DGRI office:

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.	Business Hours:
29 Pearl St NW, Suite 1	Monday – Friday
Grand Rapids, MI 49503	8:30am – 5pm

1. *Downtown Boundaries:* <https://tinyurl.com/DDABoundariesGR>
2. *DGRI Funding Policy:* <https://tinyurl.com/DGRI-Funding-Policy>
3. *Grant Application:* [www.surveymonkey.com/r/BizInnovationGrantFY25](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BizInnovationGrantFY25)
4. *Owner Approval Template:* [www.downtowngr.org/business-support](http://www.downtowngr.org/business-support)
5. *City of Grand Rapids Vendor Registration Form:*  
<https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Services/Register-as-a-VendorSupplier>

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