

ACTIVATE GRANTS

SUMMER 2025

Funding Projects up to $10,000 Each

Applications Due : March 9, 2025

DOWNTOWN
GRAND RAPIDS INC.

Shannon Mack 2024

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 : March 9, 2025 at 11:59 p.m. 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 2025. 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.

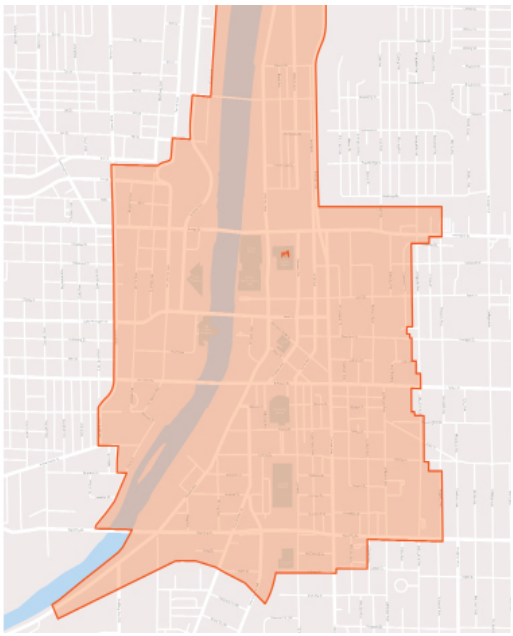
Location

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 HELD WITHIN THE DGRI BOUNDARIES.

Insurance

Artists are responsible for their own insurance. Depending on the location and type of work artists may be required to carry General Liability. 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 Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc.
- 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

January 2025 : Applications open
January 15, 2025 : Chalk River Labs : Technology, Art and the Power of Projection
(more information on the following page)
March 3, 2025 : Deadline for applicant questions submitted to kmoore@downtowngr.org by 11:59PM EST
March 9, 2025 : Applications deadline by 11:59PM EST
April 12, 2025 : Applicants notified
May-June 2025 : Installation plans & schedule finalized, permits obtained from the City of Grand Rapids if needed
June - August 2025: Installation period
Fall 2025: Projects completed and removed if applicable

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



Jess T Dugan / Grand Rapids Art Museum 2024

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 Rapid's 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. Please check for updates on our social media.

Chalk River Labs : Technology, Art and the Power of Projection
January 15, 2025
6:00PM - 7:00PM
Woodbridge N Ferris Building, Room 217
Free with Registration

World of Winter artist Jay Tettamanti, of Chalk River Labs, presents an inspiring talk showcasing his renowned projection sculptures that merge light, sound, and form. Attendees will explore Tettamanti's creative journey, learn about DGRI's Activate Grants for public art projects, and gain insights into transforming spaces through art and technology.

Activate Grant Virtual Q&A (Recording)
DGRI's Activation Manager, Katie Moore, will walks through the application materials and answer audience questions about the grant. You can find the recording here.

How to Submit a Proposal

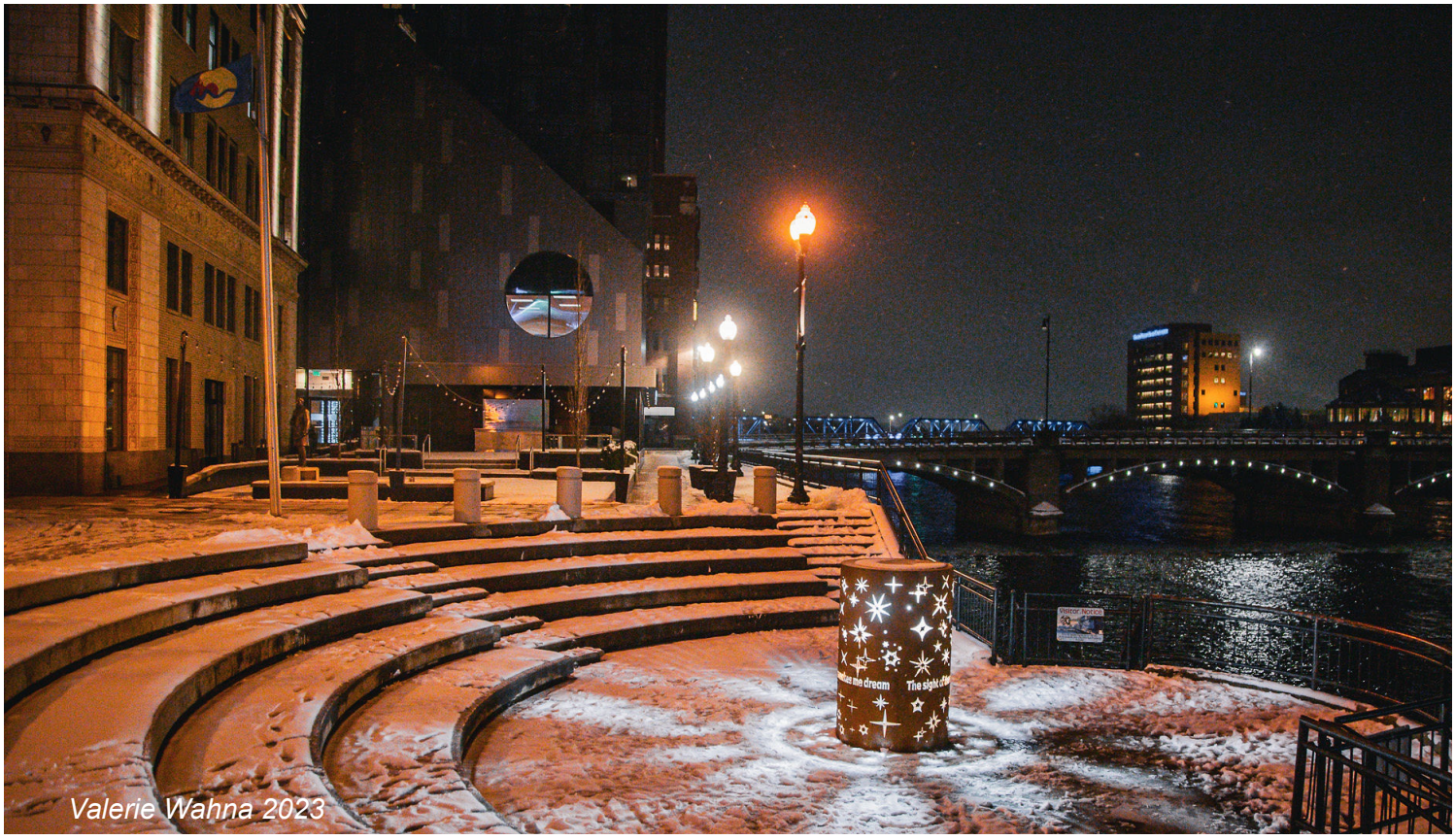
Please submit the following information by March 9, 2025. File names should include artists' first and last name. Dropbox link can be found here.

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

- Please complete this short questionaire. (Does not need to be emailed or added to Dropbox)
- Resume or CV that includes relative experience.
- Artist website or social media that represents similar projects. If you don't have either please provide at least (5) images or videos of relatable previous projects.
- Proposed location(s) for project. You can find a list of locations at the end of this document or propose a new location.
- 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.
- Renderings and/or images of proposed project.
- Site-map of proposed installation/project.
- Estimated budget including a breakdown of costs. Keep in mind DGRI pays 1/2 up front and 1/2 after the project is complete.

Questions?

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

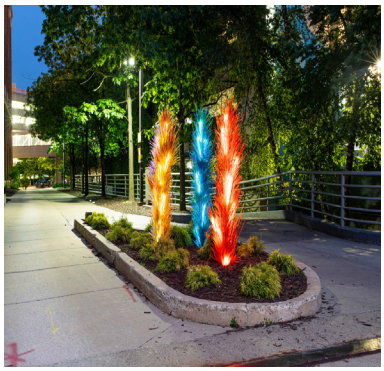


Activate Grant
Potential Locations 2025

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.



Vacant Storefronts
Various Locations



Blue Bridge Sculpure Garden
Blue Bridge



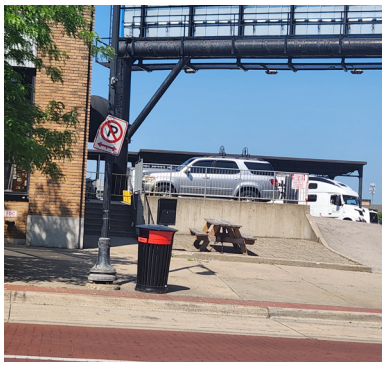
Coldbrook River Edge Trail
1101 City Building Riverwalk



City Hall (Monroe)
300 Monroe Ave. NW



Laker Line Underpass
312 Fulton St. W



Seating Area
133 Cesar E. Chavez Ave. SW



Green Space
Public Museum Parking Ramp



Corner of Cherry & S Curve
(Behind Studio Park)



Fish Ladder Park
606 Front Ave. NW



Riverwalk



Van Andel Alley
130 Fulton St. W



Ah-Nab-Awen Park Pavillion



Parking Ramps



Planters



Green Space
300 Monroe Ave. NW



Alleyways



Heartside Park
301 Ionia Ave. SW



Studio Park
123 Ionia Ave. SW



Five Points
762 Midtown Arcade



Pekich Park
9 Cherry St. SW



Unkown Locations

Activate Grant
Example Sites & Activations

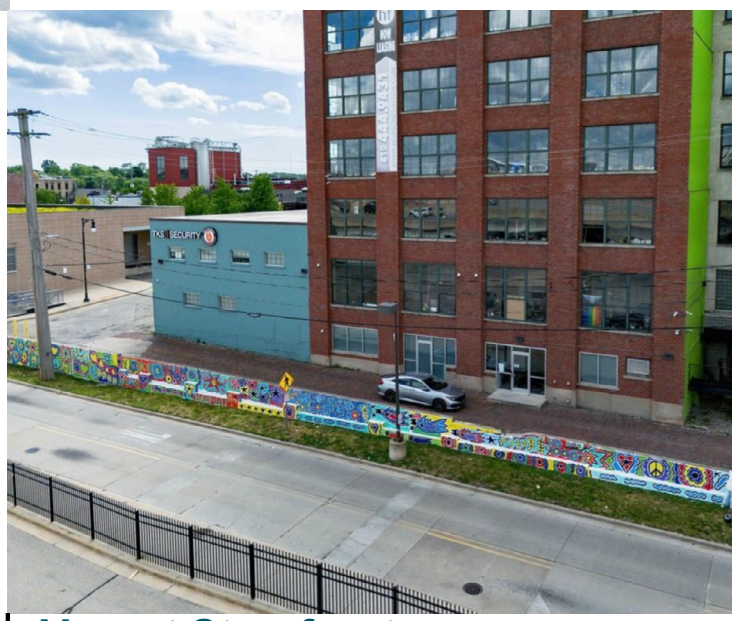


Mechanical Boxes

Shannon Mack used vibrant colors and abstract elements to brighten a drab corner. There are more mechanical boxes throughout the downtown that need some love. If you have one in mind, please email DGRI to confirm their eligibility. .

Overlooked Spaces

Artists Reb Roberts and Carmel Loftis revitalized a dilapidated retaining wall near the road to the Rapid Station with a vibrant and playful mural. Recognizing the potential of the space to benefit from a touch of color and creativity, they brought it to life with their art. A well-thought-out mural proposal often focuses on transforming areas in need of care and attention into something inspiring and beautiful.





Vacant Storefronts

Artist Elise Klein Hewitt reimagined a vacant downtown storefront, turning it into a vibrant showcase of digitial art. She personally designed the piece and collaborated with a local company for printing and installation. Vinyl prints like this provide a striking, impactful way to bring art to life with minimal physical demands.

Activate Grant
Example Sites & Activations

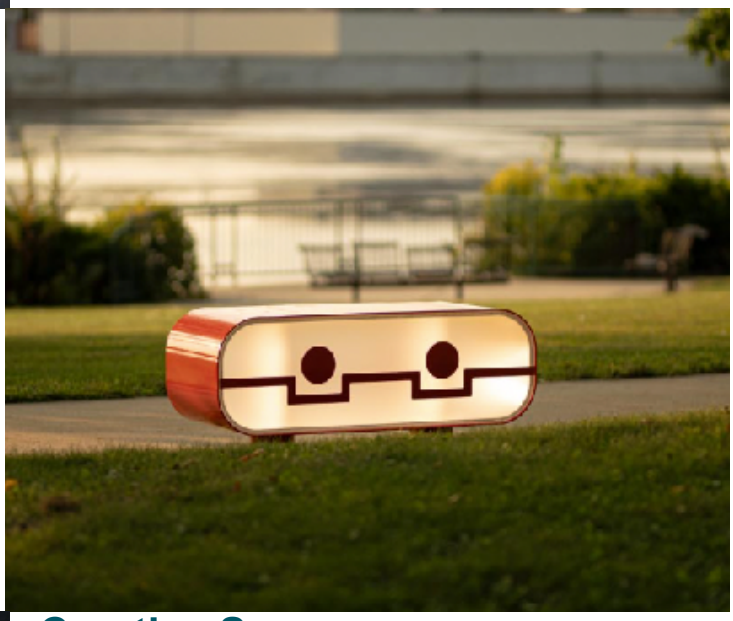


Innovative Events

Zachary Trebellas and Eirann Betka-Pope co-organized the Rapid Art Movement as part of the World of Winter festival. For two evenings, they will transform a DASH bus into a mobile art experience featuring performances, poetry, and visual art. This initiative not only showcases local talent but also encourages visitors to explore and learn how to ride the DASH bus. It's a compelling example of how to creatively activate a unique space with a strong, impactful proposal.

Functional Sculptures

Jonah and Troy Bosworth teamed up to design a series of functional sculptures that are bursting with color and personality. These playful pieces double as seating, providing a creative solution for a park that previously lacked benches.





Creative Spaces

Artist and gallerist Steven Smith repurposed a discarded shipping container into a versatile gallery and performance space. He curated a dynamic program featuring everything from painting exhibitions to ballet performances and community events. This innovative approach brings the concept of a traditional gallery into the public realm, making art more accessible and engaging.