



# Public Spaces and Community Places

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## Application Guide **2014 - 2015**

## **Program Description**

In conjunction with the Detroit-based crowdfunding site known as Patronicity and the Michigan Municipal League, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) has developed “Public Spaces and Community Places”, a creative funding mechanism.

Donation crowdfunding, a simple and innovative way to generate public interest and raise donations to revitalize or create public spaces, has recently become popular amongst groups looking to make local improvements. Because it utilizes web-based donations, projects are accessible to anyone willing to make a donation. Further, this tool engages the public as each person plays a part in achieving community improvements, and instills community pride as residents become invested in their surroundings.

Patronicity uses donation crowdfunding exclusively within Michigan’s vibrant communities. Projects in our traditional downtowns are aided by Public Spaces and Community Places, which assists the fundraising efforts of patrons. With the incentive of a funding match from the MEDC if the financial goal is reached, the creative funding mechanism mobilizes community members to make individual contributions. Potential projects must focus on the “activation of public spaces and community places.” Michigan’s ability to attract and retain young, knowledge based talent—is greatly increased by taking advantage of unique, downtown placemaking assets in each of our communities, making this funding mechanism even more valuable.

As these projects affect the lives and well-being of entire communities, it is important that they have established public awareness, local momentum and hopefully, the support of Patronicity.

## **Eligible Applicants**

The creative funding mechanism is available to projects located in Michigan communities which contain a traditional downtown. Local communities, non-profits, and private entities are eligible to apply.

A traditional downtown is defined as follows:

- 1) 20 or more commercial parcels that have been zoned, planned or used for commercial development for 50 years or more.
- 2) The area consists of over 50% of zero lot-line development.
- 3) The area has a pedestrian-friendly infrastructure.
- 4) The area consists of over 50% of the property being described as multi-story buildings of historical or architectural significance or a historic district.

## **Types of Activities Allowed**

Applications may be submitted for project activities directly related to the description above. It is important these projects have established public awareness and local momentum.

Projects that fit this description would include but are not limited to:

- Streetscape Beautification & Walkability
- Public Plaza Development
- Access to Public Amenities (Riverwalks, Canoe Livery, Pier Enhancements)
- Farmer’s Markets, Community Kitchens, Pop-Up Retail/Incubator Space
- Alley Rehabilitation
- Park Enhancements
- Bike Paths & Non-Motorized Infrastructure
- Bandshells & Amphitheaters
- Community Theater Rehabilitation (non-profit)
- Public Wi-Fi
- Place Branding & Event Implementation
- Any other project that activates public space or a community place

\*\*Any event-based activation of public space will be limited to a \$7500 grant amount. Event-based projects must be taking place over at least a 3-month period. Projects activating multiple spaces are preferred. Established festivals and entertainment series are not eligible.

### **Grant Dollars**

Preference will be given to projects that present an initial cash match of the required funds upon application. If your project does not have this initial investment set up, you are still eligible to apply. All projects must be 100% funded and ready for execution with the initial cash match (if applicable), the fund raise, and the MEDC matching grant. Eligible projects must have a minimum total cost of \$10,000. MEDC matching grant funds will be available up to \$100,000 per project. The total amount of grant funds available in connection with this funding mechanism is \$720,000.

Initial cash match constitutes matching funds provided by a project stakeholder: the local unit of government, a non-profit entity, private source, or other state or federal agencies, which are committed to the project scope of work at the time of application.

For example:

1. Total project cost: \$120,000  
Initial Cash Match: \$ 70,000  
Financial Gap: \$50,000
  - Patronicity Campaign Goal: \$25,000
  - MEDC Match, if Patronicity Campaign Goal is achieved: \$25,000
  
2. Total project cost: \$30,000
  - Patronicity Campaign Goal: \$15,000
  - MEDC Match, if Patronicity Goal is achieved: \$15,000

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Projects will be evaluated on a variety of factors, including, but not limited to:

- a defined and focused project
- overall impact of the project on the community and placemaking efforts
- local financial commitment and documented plan of how to attain the necessary match needed
- current fundraising and marketing campaigns
- project location (preference given to projects connecting to or located in a traditional downtown)
- project start and completion date

Preference will be given to projects that are able to initiate the project by the deadline (up to 60 days) of agreement and which have funding sources that allow the project to begin in that time period. Projects with multiple funding sources will need to demonstrate that they will be able to begin the project in a timely manner. A higher preference will be given to projects with an initial cash match.

### **Other Details**

- Projects must hit crowdfunding target by the 60 day deadline or else they will not receive the grant money.
- Patronicity will provide crowdfunding support to those awarded through technical and marketing assistance.
- Any one donor can donate a maximum of \$10,000 to the raise.
- Grant disbursements will be negotiated on an individual basis depending on the needs of the project and community.
- It is not required that the projects are competitively bid, but it is highly recommended.
- Grants will only be made to an applicant deemed eligible by the MEDC.

## **Project Process Flow**

- **STEP 1- Tell Us About Your Project**

Applicants will utilize the [Patronicity website](#) to build out a basic profile for their project. This profile acts as the initial application. Once a project page is started, Patronicity will make contact with the applicant. Applicants may be required to acquire a solicitation license.

- **STEP 2- Patronicity Review**

Patronicity will perform an initial screening of the project and profile. Patronicity staff may request additional information to determine the project's appropriateness for crowdfunding.

- **STEP 3- MEDC/MML Review**

If project passes initial Patronicity review, projects will be forwarded to the review team and evaluated on the criteria noted in this document. MEDC/MML staff may contact the applicant for more information.

- **STEP 4- Patronicity Polish**

If approved by the review team, Patronicity will then engage fully with the applicant to polish off the project page, talk marketing, and build out the crowdfunding campaign.

- **STEP 5- Project Goes Live!**

Start crowdfunding! Patronicity will provide technical assistance throughout the raise period.

- **STEP 6- Implementation**

If the crowdfunding campaign is successful, MEDC will match the funds raised and implementation can soon follow.