Listos' Butterfly Festival, a Start-Up Event Grant award recipient in 2022

Start-Up Event Grant

2023 Grant application

Deadline to submit: December 5, 2022

The Rochester Downtown Alliance (RDA) is seeking community partners to bring fresh ideas, energy, and audiences to downtown in 2023. We are now accepting applications for new events, activities or programs planned to encourage community engagement throughout downtown. Grant awards can be up to $3,000 with an additional $500 available for marketing design work. A total of $25,000 is available in the 2023 Start-Up Event Grant fund.

RDA mission: "To create, enhance, and promote a downtown experience that is welcoming, fun and livable."

RDA is seeking programs that:
- Align with the RDA's mission and further the idea of creating a welcoming, fun and livable downtown.
- Engage a range of cultures, ages, and backgrounds.
- Introduce new ideas and perspectives that inspire curiosity and interest in Rochester and add value to the downtown experience.
- Meet the 2023 priorities identified for the grant.

2023 Priorities:

The Start-Up Event Grant plays an important role in inspiring events that help meet the needs of downtown in any given year. In 2023, we are especially looking for applications that:
- Engage/support current retailers in a meaningful way.
- Make creative use of vacant retail spaces.
- Take place in the early months of the year (January through April).
- Take place on weekends.

Grant requirements:

Location: The event, activity, or program must take place in the downtown Rochester's special service district (SSD). $10,000, provided by Destination Medical Center (DMC) , has been earmarked for events taking place in Peace Plaza.

Timeline: The Start-Up Event Grant-funded event, activity, or program must take place between February 4, 2023, and December 31, 2023.

Demonstrated funding sources: First time events may use the RDA grant as their sole source of funding. Repeat events must demonstrate their ability to find matching funds to their RDA grant.

Pre-event documentation: If awarded, organizers must submit the following to RDA no later than 30 days before the event, activity, or program:

- A final budget with revenue (including in-kind) and expenses.
- A marketing plan that includes all planned paid and organic tactics and how Downtown Rochester MN's brand will be used.

Marketing: Applicants are expected to make their best effort to market their events. All marketing must be reviewed and approved by the RDA at least 60 days prior to an event. An additional $500 is available to use toward design of promotional materials by an approved downtown graphic designer. Guidelines are as follows:

- The Downtown Rochester, MN logo must be incorporated in any print and/or digital promotions. Downtown Rochester logos usage guidelines are available here. For questions, please contact Elia Banuelos, RDA marketing and design project manager, at ebanuelos@downtownrochester.com.
- Website, social media, or blogs must have a link directly to the DowntownRochesterMN.com website.
- Promotions and media outreach must state the event, activity, program is funded in part by a Start-Up Event Grant from the Rochester Downtown Alliance.

Post-event documentation: All documents must be completed and submitted before the RDA is able to issue a reimbursement.

- Any receipts and invoices relating to RDA's funding for the event, activity, or program.
- Final budget
- Summary of estimated event attendance and any other key metrics
- Photographs
- A completed W9
- Completed event recap form

Restrictions: Funds may **not** be used for:

- Food or beverage
- Alcohol
- Permanent (depreciable) assets (tools, laptops, cameras, etc.)
- Salaries for staff
- Political or religious event, activities, or programs

To apply:

Send the following materials to the Rochester Downtown Alliance:

- Completed application (form below)
- Your event, activity, or program budget that shows both expenses and anticipated revenue and/or in-kind contributions including requested amount from RDA. Please include the cost of city permits in your budget.
- Marketing plan describing how RDA's brand will be used
- Inspiration photos

This information can be mailed/e-mailed with or attached to this application (below).

Each submitted request will be initially reviewed by RDA staff for completeness. Grants that meet requirements will be sent to the review committee. Those applications that meet all the grant requirements will be asked to participate in a Pitch Night January 11, 2023.

Timeline:

1. **November 14, 2022:** Applications open
2. **November 21, 2022:** 1 p.m. Zoom Organizer Planning Q&A
   a. Applicants can send questions ahead of time, and we'll send a recording in case applicants cannot attend.
3. **November 30, 2022**: 6 p.m. Grant application workshop in person
4. **December 5, 2022**: Applications close
5. **December 5-12, 2022**: Applications reviewed for completeness including attached requirements
6. **December 19, 2022**: Contact applicants who will participate in the Pitch Night*
7. **December 28, 2023:** In person Pitch Night workshop
8. **January 11, 2023:** Pitch Night in Discovery Square

***Pitch Night**: A fun and interactive opportunity to present your event, activity, or program to the review committee and attendees.

Applications will be evaluated based on:

Ability to meet basic requirements:

- *Mission alignment:* Event should align with the RDA mission statement, which is, "To create, enhance, and promote a downtown experience that is welcoming, fun, and livable."
- *Location:* Event must take place within the designated downtown SSD.
- Uniqueness of event, activity, or program:
  The program should introduce new ideas and/or perspectives and demonstrate originality.
- Alignment with 2023 downtown priorities:
  We are especially looking for applications that engage/support current retailers in a meaningful way, make creative use of vacant retail spaces, take place in the early months of the year, January – April, or take place on weekends.
- Demonstrated event planning experience:
  Applicants should have a team member with demonstrated event planning experience.
  First-time organizers can strengthen their application by attending RDA's optional Organizer Planning Q&A Session.
- Estimated impact:
  Events anticipating large attendance, or kept free and open to the public, may be given priority.

Additional evaluation considerations:

- *Community engagement:* Involve, represent, or invite a range of cultures, ages, and backgrounds to experience downtown.
- *Introduce new ideas and perspectives* that encourage curiosity/interest in Rochester and add value to the downtown experience.

Optional organizer planning Q&A session:

- Event planning downtown can be complex, and we want to support new ideas as best as we can. RDA will plan two event-planning best practices Q&A session prior to the application closing.
  - Virtual Session: November 21 at 1 p.m.
  - In-Person at the RDA office: November 30 at 6 p.m.

For additional information, contact the Rochester Downtown Alliance. We look forward to hearing from you and seeing your ideas for a downtown event, activity, or program.

Rochester Downtown Alliance
info@downtownrochestermn.com

Start-Up Event Grant application

Date of application: _____

All fields are required unless otherwise noted

Proposed event, activity, or program information:
Give us the basics; What is your event all about?

1. Name of event, activity, or program: _____

2. Description of event, activity, program – be specific in noting overall event itinerary, including anticipated start and end times, activities, food/beverage, entertainment, etc.

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

Inspiration photos: To help the jury understand your idea, please provide no more than three (3) inspiration photos of your potential event or program (images pulled from Google are acceptable as these will not be publicly displayed).

Grant history and event planning background

1. Have you ever received grant funding from the RDA:
   _____ Yes   _____ No

   If yes, how much funding and for what? _____
   _____

   o First time events may apply without securing matching grant funds.

   o Repeat events may reapply for funding, but applicants must indicate their ability to match requested grant funds through additional partnerships. Please give additional sponsor information in the "Grant Request" portion of this application.

2. Briefly tell us about your/your organization's past event-planning experience:

_____
_____
_____

Event Details: Where and when will it take place, and how many people do you think will attend? This section helps us to see your vision more clearly and gives us a better understanding of how your event aligns with the RDA mission and goals.

1. Date(s) of event, activity, or program (the RDA is especially interested in events taking place in the first quarter of the year, January – April):

_____

2. Day(s) of the week the event(s), activity, or program is/are happening (weekend events [Saturday and Sunday] will be given priority): _____

3. Location(s) of event, activity, program:_____

   Please note: The event, activity, or program must take place in the downtown Rochester's special service district (SSD). $10,000, provided by Destination Medical Center (DMC), has been earmarked for those taking place in Peace Plaza.

4. Estimated event attendance: _____

5. Will an admission fee be charged? _____ Yes   _____ No
   If yes, detail admission fee(s) and how proceeds will be used: _____
   _____
   _____

6. Will you have additional "experience event planners", helpers, volunteers, or support persons? _____

7. Do you agree to follow COVID-19 safety protocols and guidelines as directed by Olmsted County and the state of Minnesota if needed? _____

8. How does your request align with the RDA mission statement, which is "to create, enhance, and promote a downtown experience that is welcoming, fun, and livable"?

   _____
   _____

9. Does this event, activity, or program engage underrepresented groups and/or a range of cultures, ages and backgrounds with downtown? Please explain.

   _____
   _____

10. Does this event, activity, or program introduce new ideas and perspectives that encourage curiosity/interest in Rochester and add value to the downtown experience? Please explain.

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

11. Does this event meet one of our 2023 downtown priorities for the grant? These include engaging existing retailers in a meaningful way, activating vacant retail spaces, winter/early spring events (January – April), and events on weekends. Please explain _____

Optional: If you feel it would be helpful, please include a two-minute-maximum video explaining your proposed event, activity, or program.

Grant request (up to $3,000)
A big part of planning an event is anticipating costs and sticking to the proposed budget. Please take time to identify areas where grant funding would help you complete your event. For your application to be considered complete, you must submit a proposed budget that shows both expenses and anticipated revenue and/or in-kind contributions.

1. How much funding (up to $3,000) are you requesting for your event, activity, or program? _____

2. Would your event, activity, or program like to utilize $500 towards design assistance from a downtown graphic designer?
   _____ Yes   _____ No

3. If you do not receive full requested funding, will you still plan to hold the event, activity, or program?

_____ Yes   _____ No

4. First-time event organizers will be required to attend a virtual, first-time event planning workshop. Do you agree to represent or send someone representing your event, activity, or program?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ N/A (I am not a first-time organizer)

5. Do you plan to approach other sponsors for financial and/or in-kind contributions for the event, activity, or program? If so, please give us a general idea of your approach.

_____

_____

6. Will sponsor signage be present onsite at the event, activity, or program?

_____ Yes   _____ No

Please recall it is a marketing requirement of this grant for RDA's brand to be represented on sponsorship signage. This includes all posters, banners, and event graphics via social media.

Contact Info:
It helps us to have two points of contact to show that you have another responsible party if we couldn't reach the main applicant.

Primary contact
1. Name of applicant: _____
2. Name of business/organization (if applicable): _____
3. Street address: _____
4. Email address: _____
5. Phone number: _____

Secondary contact
1. Name of secondary contact: _____
2. Name of business/organization (if applicable): _____
3. Street address: _____
4. Email address: _____
5. Phone number: _____

Please also submit with this completed application:
- Your event, activity, or program budget that shows both expenses and anticipated revenue and/or in-kind contributions
- Marketing plan describing how RDA's brand will be used
- Inspiration photos

Signature

Falsification and/or misrepresentation in completing this form may result in denial of the grant request and/or future consideration.

I understand that changes to the above content require immediate notification to the Rochester Downtown Alliance.

I agree to abide by all the grant requirements if awarded Start-Up Event Grant funds.

Signature: _____
Printed name: _____
Date: _____