



Start-Up Event Grant

Planning Your Application

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DEVELOPING THE IDEA

All events start out as a great idea. If your event is small, you may personally be handling most—or all—the tasks discussed in this guide. However, for larger events, it's important to bring passionate people together and talk openly about what community needs exist, topics that excite the group, and ideas other communities have explored. This is a great way to start the process.

The objectives and outcomes of the event

It's important to be clear and concise about the objectives and desired event outcomes. Often, sponsors or a grant application will ask what these are, so it's best to address this early.

Questions to consider:

- *What do you hope to achieve from the event, and how will you know when you have succeeded?*
- *What are some key words to describe the event?*

The audience of the event

This area of development focuses on determining who your event is trying to reach. Once you have a target audience in mind, you can plan suitable activities and market the event effectively.

Questions to consider:

- *What age range are you looking to target?*
- *Where does your target demographic live?*
- *How or where does this audience receive information about events?*

The wants of your audience

Once you have an idea of who your audience is, you can start to determine what type of programming those attendees might want to do.

Questions to consider:

- *What type of experience or message do you want to convey through your activities?*
- *What type of activities does this target audience typically attend?*
- *Are the activities within your event budget or your target audience's budget?*
- *How much time is needed for organizing?*
- *What are your volunteer needs?*

After these types of questions are answered, you should have a better understanding of whether the event is desired by the community and if your group wants to invest their time in organizing it.

PLANNING THE EVENT

When entering the planning stage of an event, you will want to begin the process of envisioning what the day of the event will look like. To do this, you will want to develop an overview of the event, assign roles and responsibilities within your group, assess potential venues, purchase, or rent equipment based on programming or activity, and investigate any possible permitting needed.

Determining this information will also help when you begin soliciting sponsors, marketing the event, and recruiting volunteers.

START-UP EVENT GRANT ALIGNMENT

In this application, you will be asked to define how your event aligns with RDA's priorities and how it engages the community in a unique or novel way.

2024 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 2024, we are especially looking for applications that:

- Interest in partnering with RDA in event execution
- Engage/support current businesses by increasing downtown foot traffic and driving commerce
- Activations of the Peace Plaza and the Chateau Theatre (RDA can help negotiate venue costs)
- Events anticipating large attendance with high community impact.
- Take place on evenings and weekends.
- Events kept free and open to the public.
- Winter events November 2024- February 2025

Applications will be evaluated based on:

- Does your event meet the grant's requirements?
- Is the budget achievable and realistic to the timeline?
- Does your event align with the 2024 RDA grant priorities?
- Do you demonstrate interest in partnering and evidence of capacity to execute the event?
- Is your event unique? Is it a new or fresh event that adds variety to the downtown experience?
- Does your event drive foot traffic and increase commerce downtown?
- Does your event involve, represent, or invite a range of cultures, ages, and backgrounds to experience downtown?

EVENT OVERVIEW PLANNING

- **Event title:** Choose a title that is clear, concise, and, if possible, catchy.
- **Date of the event:** Find out what other events might be happening around the same time. Competing with other events may lead to struggles for funding and potentially low attendance numbers. Upcoming events can be viewed at:
 - DowntownRochesterMN.com/EventsCalendar
 - ExperienceRochesterMN.com
 - Facebook.com/Events
- **Time and length of the event:** This may depend on the location of the event, as there are some sound or park ordinances for outdoor events to consider.
- **Event objectives:** Clearly state what the event objectives are.
- **Event outcome:** There may be more than one outcome. Bullet points can help make these outcome(s) to the point and clear.
- **Description of the event:** Put together a short description of your event. This description will assist when initially informing or soliciting people and organizations about the event.
- **Target audience:** Describe the age range, gender, and communities served. Sponsors will be interested in this detail to assess the economic and social benefits the event may have on the communities reached.

- **Number of attendees:** For a first-time event, this might be hard to accurately predict but looking at attendance from similar events might help.
- **Event programming:** List the possible number and type of musicians, vendors, or activities the event will feature.

TEAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Having a team of people to help plan the event is helpful if the event is complex. Determining each team member's skill sets will help assign roles, define responsibilities, and set a path for accomplishing the event objectives.

Useful skill sets may include Project management, communication, scheduling, sponsorships/development, marketing/promotion, creative design, financial planning.

VENUE

The right setting for an event can generate a positive emotional response and a memorable experience that will bring attendees back year after year.

Venue Tips:

- Working with a single entity like a hotel or event center that provides a location, food & beverage, security, accommodations, and third-party services like audio/visual production may give you the ability to negotiate the entire package.
- Inquiring of the venue if they have any decorations, linens, or furniture included with the rental.
- Asking the caterer about ordering food "by consumption," meaning you only pay if the food is consumed. This generally works for pre-packaged items like snacks or soda.

PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

GRANT REQUIREMENTS:

Location: The event, activity, or program must take place in the downtown Rochester's [special service district \(SSD\)](#).

Timeline: The Start-Up Event Grant-funded event, activity, or program must take place between March 2024- March 2024

First Year Recipients: If this will be the first time receiving the Start-Up Event Grant funding, you may use it as your sole source of funding. This includes events that may have been done before but have never been funded by this grant.

Second Year Recipients: Second year recipients must demonstrate their ability to find matching funds to their RDA grant.

Third Year and Up Recipients: If you are interested in partnership for a third year+ event, please reach out directly to info@downtownrochestermn.com.

BUDGET

The more you plan your budget in advance, work in several stages, and stay close to the process, there will be fewer surprises to contend with.

Details:

- Awards can be up to \$5,000
 - Administrative overhead should be minimal
 - Funds can be used for catering and vendors but **may not** be used for direct food, beverage, or alcohol purchase
 - Funds **may not** be used to purchase permanent (depreciable) assets (tools, laptops, cameras, etc.), or for political or religious event, activities, or programs
- This is a reimbursement-based grant award. If you receive funding, organizers will need to submit the following items post-event:
 - All receipts and invoices
 - The final budget
 - A completed event recap forms (includes attendance, photos, and event summary)
 - A completed W9

CITY PERMITS

City permitting should be factored into your budget. RDA staff can assist with this process for grant recipients- [Take this survey to figure out what permit you may need](#)

- Special event permit: outdoor event exceeding 300 participants or includes amplified sound
- Right of way permit: need bagged parking meters or street closures
- Temporary membrane structures permit (a.k.a. tent permit): including tents or canopies

SAMPLE EVENT BUDGET:

Please note: This is a sample budget and may differ from the needs and budget of your event

Event Name: First Music Festival

Event Date: June 3, 2024

BUDGET:

Estimated revenues: *List all sources, including in-kind donations.*

Beer company sponsorship	<u>\$1,000</u>
RDA Start-Up Event Grant	<u>\$1,000</u>
Food vendor fees (\$75 x 20 vendors)	<u>\$1,500</u>
Subtotal:	<u>\$3,500</u>

Less: Estimated Expenses: *Be as specific as possible in listing each item.*

Audio/visual production	<u>\$2,500</u>
Stage and tent rental	<u>\$(Free/in-kind)</u>
200 (11" x 17") event posters	<u>\$150</u>
Facebook boosted post	<u>\$50</u>
20 bagged parking meters (\$7 per meter)	<u>\$140</u>
Subtotal:	<u>\$2840</u>

Net total: \$660

(Subtotal of estimated revenues minus subtotal of estimated expenses = grand total)

MARKETING PLAN REQUIREMENTS



Rochester Downtown Alliance logo usage

The Downtown Rochester MN logo, the brand identity of the Rochester Downtown Alliance, must be incorporated in any print or digital promotions of your Start-Up Event Grant awarded project.

To ensure accuracy of its usage, please send all designs to Elia Banuelos, RDA marketing and design project manager, at ebanuelos@downtownrochestermn.com at least two weeks prior to your production deadline to ensure a timely review.



[Scan for full logo usage guidelines and downloadable files](#)



Mentions in media and on social media

When promoting the event/program on social media and in press releases, the phrase, “Funded in part by a Start-Up Event Grant from the Rochester Downtown Alliance” must be included.

Whenever possible, please mention the above phrase when being interviewed by media.



Tag Downtown Rochester, MN on social media

- Facebook: @DowntownRochesterMN
- Instagram: @DowntownRochesterMN
- Twitter: @DowntownRochMN



Submit to the Downtown Rochester events calendar

With more than 45,900 pageviews in 2022, our website’s event calendar is a highly trafficked and free promotional avenue for your event. And the best part? It’s simple to submit something to the calendar!

These submitted events get included in our weekly e-newsletter, which is sent to 10,100+ subscribers.



[Scan for event submission form](#)



Other recommended free community event calendars

- ABC 6 News—KAAL TV
- ExperienceRochesterMN.com
- KIMT News 3
- KTTC TV
- Post Bulletin and 507 Magazine
- Rochester Local
- Townsquare Media



Destination Medical Center logo usage (for events hosted in Peace Plaza)

Any Start-Up Event Grant that is hosted in Peace Plaza should include the Destination Medical Center logo on any print and/or digital collateral, in addition to the Downtown Rochester MN logo.

For files and how to use the DMC logo, please contact Geno Palazzari, DMC communications manager, at genopalazzari@dmceda.org or 307-696-9088.