



Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)

Arts & Culture Vibrant Storefronts Initiative

NOFA Issue Date – July 26, 2024

Application Due Date - Rolling Application Submissions

Para asistencia, llame al 311. Rau kev pab 311. Hadii aad Caawimaad u baahantahay 311. For reasonable accommodations or alternative formats please contact mpsaca@minneapolismn.gov. People who are deaf or hard of hearing can use a relay service to call 311 at 612-673-3000. TTY users call 612-263-6850.

Introduction

The City of Minneapolis Department of Arts and Cultural Affairs (ACA) is seeking applications in response to this competitive award funding solicitation. The Arts & Culture Vibrant Storefronts Initiative (Program) will offer awards of up to \$50,000 per year, per selected applicants for partial or full rental costs of participating rental spaces over a 2-year period. The City has a total of \$250,000 in funding for the Program in this NOFA.

Program Background

The Program is a city-led funding opportunity to support and grow creative opportunities within the ecosystem of downtown and other parts of the city with the goal of increasing vibrancy, innovation, and sustainability. The ACA is bringing together property owners with individual artists and arts organizations by providing funding to subsidize rental costs. This yields a dual advantage: ensuring stable tenants for property owners and furnishing essential space for the local creative community.

The overarching goal of the Program is to provide public financial support, advocacy, and community building for local artists, creative entrepreneurs, and arts organizations to:

- Stimulate the economic revitalization of targeted areas in the downtown district by building a new sense of cross-sector creative cohesion.
- Increase and catalyze arts vibrancy, foot traffic and cultural public engagement through supporting and incentivizing prime areas for arts activation.
- Assist local artists, creative entrepreneurs and arts organizations with physical space to workshop, incubate, develop and offer their programming and artmaking to the public.
- Address the ongoing space crisis affecting the creative community in Minneapolis and increase a sense of public safety in downtown.
- Remediate patterns of systemic and institutionalized discrimination, disinvestment, economic exclusion, and disenfranchisement of peoples and identities that have been suppressed and erased.

Competitive applications for the Program will be accepted on a rolling basis. At the end of the initial two-year contract period, selected applicants can re-apply for new program funding.

Program Eligibility

1. Eligible Locations

Selected applicants may choose from the vacant commercial properties listed in the Arts & Cultural affairs application website mplsartsandculture.org/vibrant-storefronts (“Participating Properties”). Following selection, selected applicants will be required to enter into a two-year lease agreement with the owners of their chosen Participating Property in order to receive Program funds.

2. Eligible Applicants

- Applicants must be Minnesota residents and be able to work in-person throughout the term of their work on this Program. Preference will be given to Minneapolis residents.
- Applicants must be local individual artists or artist groups/teams with professional artistic resumes spanning a minimum of three years or arts/culture service organizations that can demonstrate a minimum of three years of programmatic history.
- Applicants must focus on one or more of the following artistic and community-building practices: visual, performing, literary, media, traditional, digital and public arts as well as design and craft and those working in non-traditional media.
- Applicants must be able to commit to a 2-year lease in one of the Participating Properties.
- Applicants must program the Participating Properties with on-going, at least quarterly accessible, free or low-cost events which are open to the public. These programs need to be reviewed and approved by ACA staff and should be relevant to the work of the artists/organization.
- Multiple applicants may submit a joint application to “cluster” together in one of the Participating Properties to maximize the potential of collaboration and use of the space, so long as each applicant meets all eligibility requirements of this NOFA.

3. Eligible Expenses

The maximum award amount is \$50,000 per year, per selected applicant, for partial or full rental costs of a Participating Property over a 2-year period. Applicants should note that this funding may not cover full rental costs. Therefore, Applicant will be responsible for the financial difference. Award funding cannot be used for costs such as an applicant’s general operating expenses; political, religious, or lobbying activities; and gift cards, cash incentives, or giveaway items.

Program Requirements

- **Accessibility:** Ensure that public events and open houses are accessible to diverse audiences, considering factors such as language, mobility, and sensory accessibility.
- **Visual Impact:** Demonstrate how applicant will incorporate visual appeal to attract attention in addition to the City of Minneapolis – ACA logo on marketing and program promotion highlighting their location is an ACA Vibrant Storefront.
- **Safety and Compliance:** Applicant must comply with all lease terms and city safety

guidelines.

- **Collaboration:** Collaboration between ACA staff, local businesses, community organizations, and residents to foster a sense of community and collective creativity.

Program Deliverables

- **Audience Engagement:** An audience/community engagement strategy that demonstrates the incorporation of interactive elements to engage passersby and encourage participation to support gatherings and activations.
- **Programming:** Applicant must program the space with ongoing, at least quarterly events that are accessible, free or low cost, and open to the public.
- **Local Context:** Demonstrate how applicant will integrate elements of the local community, culture, or history to create a sense of connection and relevance.
- **Documentation:** Record and photograph production of artwork, projects and or events held at the participating storefront. On site activations and public/community engagement must be captured and shared with the city and the constituents. Deliver a communications/marketing plan that includes how applicant will make their events accessible, collect demographic data. Conduct surveys before and after the integration to gauge community members' sense of connection and relevance
- **Quarterly Reporting:** Award recipients will provide two primary types of reporting to ACA staff on a quarterly basis: **financial and programmatic reporting**. These reports provide information about the overall financial status and performance of the awardees ACA Vibrant Storefront Program. Financial reports will include proof of rent paid per month and revenue generated. Programmatic reporting will include tracking the number of artists supported, variety of audiences and communities served via the ACA approved programming. Recipients must also respond to any audit requests that pertain to the award.
- **Annual Reporting:** An annual report must be submitted twelve months from the date the property lease is signed. This annual report must include audience engagement numbers, number of events, description of event outcomes. revenue, number of jobs created/artists supported, description of the ways in which applicant was able to leverage their work and achieve more opportunities as well as demographics of onsite events and attendees and financial reporting.

Application Process

1. Schedule

Applications for this NOFA will be accepted and evaluated on a rolling basis in one or more rounds (depending on funding and space availability). The first round of applications will be accepted through August 30, 2024.

IMPORTANT DATES

Applications open:	July 26, 2024
Award information sessions:	August 2, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. CST (live virtual)
Questions on NOFA due:	August 6, 2024
Responses to Questions posted:	August 12, 2024
Properties site visits:	August 16, 2024
Application deadline:	August 30, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. CST
Applications review:	September 3 to September 16, 2024
Award notifications:	September 20, 2024
Eligible funding period:	24 months from the executed contract date

2. Informational Meeting

An informational meeting will be held virtually on August 2 at 2:00 p.m. at mplsartsandculture.org/vibrant-storefronts or contact mplsaca@minneapolismn.gov. Attendance is recommended, but not required. This meeting will be recorded and shared via our website mplsartsandculture.org/vibrant-storefronts

3. Properties Site Visits

A site visit to all Participating Properties with landlords present will be held on August 16, 2024. To RSVP and receive the meeting point information, register at mplsartsandculture.org/vibrant-storefronts

4. NOFA Questions or Changes

Prospective applicants may direct questions by email to: Mplsaca@minneapolismn.gov. Questions and responses will be posted on the ACA website: mplsartsandculture.org/vibrant-storefronts. The City reserves the right to modify this NOFA at any time. An addendum will be posted on the ACA web site if the NOFA is modified.

5. Application Submission

Applications and supporting documentation (including a business plan, budget, mission, and vision for their activation) must be submitted through the application portal at mplsartsandculture.org/vibrant-storefronts. Please make sure your application is complete by clicking on the submit button and wait until the success message is displayed on your screen. Incomplete applications may be rejected.

6. Review and Selection Process

A committee of City staff will review applications and recommend applicants for funding. The City reserves the right to reject any or all applications or parts of applications and to negotiate modifications to an entire application or specific components of the scope of work within an application to create an activation of lesser or greater magnitude than described in this NOFA or the submitted application.

7. Evaluation Criteria

In reviewing Program applications, the review team will be based on the criteria below. The City may, in its sole discretion, expand or reduce the criteria upon which it bases its final decisions.

- Ability to facilitate collaborative art or cultural activities that support the economic vitality of downtown, plus have the capacity to bring the community together by operating a Participating Property.
- Ability to facilitate programming that celebrates or promotes the rich diverse character and identity of Minneapolis and greater Minnesota.
- Demonstrated ability to ensure proposal is accessible to a diverse audience and inclusive of various backgrounds, abilities and perspectives.
- Proposed use of one of the Participating Properties, the fit of the applicant to venue and lease conditions for one of the Participating Properties, and ability to provide on-going positive impacts to the vibrancy of Downtown.
- Strength of the theme/concept/use of the Participating Property and its activation and its implementation.
- Whether the applicant and application meet all eligibility criteria and satisfy all NOFA requirements.
- Whether NOFA Project funds are available.
- How well the application meets City goals, priorities and plans including the reduction of climate impact and ensure equity. See City's official Climate equity plan here: [Climate Equity Plan - City of Minneapolis \(minneapolismn.gov\)](https://www.minneapolis.gov/climate-equity-plan)
- Expressed needs of the applicant and affiliated arts sector.
- Quality, thoroughness, and clarity of the application.
- Qualifications and experience of the applicant.
- Feasibility of proposed activities and ability of applicant to complete proposed activities.
- Level of creativity, innovation, and community building expressed in the application.
- Ability to support a broad range of unique artists and diverse arts activities that support creative art making and cultural exchange.

8. Contracting & Budget

Selected applicants will be required to enter into an award agreement with the City. The terms of the agreements will be finalized by the City and the selected applicants following selection. Selected first round applicants will be required to enter into award agreements with the City. The contract period is to be 24 months, with an estimated start date of October 1, 2024.

Selected applicants will be required to enter into a two-year lease agreement and follow the terms set forth with the owners of their chosen Participating Property in order to receive Program award funds, and the City will not be a party to that lease agreement.

Payments will only be made after a contract is executed and a signed copy of the lease agreement

has been submitted to the Program manager. Up to 25% of the total award funds may be made available to selected applicants upon contract execution. Remaining award funds will be available to selected applicants upon submission of rent receipts and documented quarterly deliverables.

9. No Applicant Recourse

The City shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by any applicant in connection with this NOFA. Applicants shall bear all costs associated with application preparation and submission, and any other activity associated with this NOFA. This NOFA does not commit the City to award a contract. Submission of an application shall neither obligate nor entitle any applicant to enter into a contract with the City.