



## **REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)**

For

### **CROSSING THE STREET: BUILDING DC's INCLUSIVE FUTURE through CREATIVE PLACEMAKING Project Concept Development & Implementation Grant**

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#### **Section I: Funding Opportunity Description**

##### **A. Background**

The District of Columbia Office of Planning (OP) is responsible for guiding development of the city, including the preservation and revitalization of our distinctive neighborhoods. OP has received a grant from the Kresge Foundation to undertake creative placemaking and civic engagement activities in select neighborhoods throughout the District. Creative placemaking is the intentional use of arts and culture to shape the physical, social and economic future of communities. OP's grant, "Crossing the Street: Building DC's Inclusive Future through Creative Placemaking" is designed to promote community-building in neighborhoods that are experiencing rapid demographic and social change; engage residents in conversations on the future of the District as OP embarks on an update of DC's Comprehensive Plan; and demonstrate or test select placemaking recommendations articulated in OP's neighborhood plans and District Department of Transportation (DDOT) transit corridor studies and livability studies.

Through this Request for Applications (RFA), OP seeks to select qualified curators/project managers to work closely with OP, District agencies and community stakeholders to define and implement creative placemaking projects. As part of this – and through a collaborative process – curators will identify the "canvas" for each project. The project "canvas" provides the spatial and community backdrop for the creative placemaking intervention in that it frames the physical setting, is influenced by the sociodemographic and planning issues facing the community, and informs the engagement approach. Projects may be of varying scales, and locations may include public as well as private properties and spaces. All projects will be temporary in nature and implemented by December 15, 2016.

After decades of population decline, the District of Columbia is growing. In support of this growth, the public and private sectors have been investing in communities across the city, expanding the choices that residents have in terms of housing, retail, recreation, transportation, and arts and cultural amenities. The city is evolving into a diverse set of neighborhoods that include established and newer residents, creating a continuum of stakeholders. This change presents an opportunity for the District to devise innovative ways for stakeholders not only to manage growth but also to interact with one another in meaningful ways and, in doing so, strengthen communities. The District's Comprehensive Plan, its 20-year vision for the future development of the city with a

focus on equity, sustainability, education, health and successful neighborhoods, provides a long term roadmap to strengthening the District of Columbia as an inclusive city. In addition, shorter term approaches such as creative placemaking can play a significant role. Through this grant opportunity, OP seeks to undertake temporary creative placemaking interventions that will promote community-building and improve connectivity in neighborhoods by literally and figuratively encouraging community stakeholders to “cross the street” and engage in conversations regarding their respective community and its future.

This grant program leverages various OP efforts, including OP’s Creative DC Action Agenda, temporary urbanism program, and Small Area (neighborhood-level) Plans. The grant will also occur in parallel with several key and relevant plans being led by OP such as the second amendment to the District’s Comprehensive Plan. In addition, OP is embarking on a citywide Cultural Plan that is intended to increase participation in cultural activities and policies, review the needs of artists, and support decision-making regarding public investments in arts and culture. In our planning work overall, OP emphasizes approaches that are: hyper-local; immersed in the context of place and population; driven by data; focused on civic engagement; and lead to equitable outcomes.

## **B. Project Objectives**

This RFA is for the award of two project phases. Phase I covers a project concept development process during which curators will work with stakeholders in generating, brainstorming and refining creative placemaking ideas, and then guide stakeholders in the identification of the project(s) and related “canvas” for implementation. Phase II covers the project implementation period during which curators will be responsible for all activities related to successful project management and execution.

### **I. The project objectives include:**

- Promote community-building in neighborhoods that are experiencing rapid demographic and social change.
- Engage residents and stakeholders in conversations on the future of the District and its neighborhoods as OP embarks on its update of DC’s Comprehensive Plan, encouraging a shared vision in how neighborhoods can evolve in the future.
- Promote neighborhoods through creative placemaking by seeding temporary arts, cultural, recreation, education, and demonstration activities.
- Demonstrate innovative approaches to creative placemaking that are framed by the physical setting, influenced by socioeconomic and planning issues facing the community, and linked to engagement activities.
- Support local arts, cultural, and creative entrepreneurs and provide residents with access to unique cultural activities and experiences.
- Demonstrate or test select placemaking recommendations articulated in OP’s neighborhood plans and the DDOT transit corridor and livability studies, particularly those that increase physical and social connectivity within neighborhoods.
- Address key planning issues facing communities, and inform OP and the Kresge Foundation on how to better integrate arts and cultural planning into neighborhood and system planning processes.

## C. Project Considerations

### I. Services and activities to be carried out by each grantee shall include:

- Concept development. Lead stakeholders through a project concept development process during which the grantee will work with OP and stakeholders on generating, brainstorming and refining creative placemaking interventions.
- Identification of priority project. Guide stakeholders during the concept development process towards the identification of a priority project and the related project “canvas” for implementation. The curators will work collaboratively with OP and stakeholders to define the canvas and determine the creative placemaking interventions that will resonate with communities and be most impactful. Curators will be encouraged to identify project canvases that promote vibrancy and community-building and include an external-facing component. Projects may be of varying scales, and locations may include public as well as private properties and spaces.
- Manage project implementation. Lead implementation of the priority projects, including: preparation and event planning; coordination with, and approvals by, District agencies and property owner(s) as needed; marketing; logistics; and, overall project management. The grantee shall identify and secure locations as needed and any related permitting.
- Neighborhood Selection. OP will match curators to target neighborhoods identified during previous planning efforts. OP is selecting these target neighborhoods based on the following criteria: 1) recently completed planning studies that identified or recommended arts and culture uses and/or creative placemaking (such as implementation of the Vibrant Retail Streets Toolkit; Temporary Urbanism; Great Streets initiative; and Neighborhood/Small Area Plan implementation); 2) current community revitalization initiatives; 3) recently completed DDOT livability and/or transit corridor studies; and 4) rapidly changing demographics and/or user groups with disparate demographics, and the threat of gentrification.
- Site Selection. Each grantee shall work with OP to identify the specific sites for the placemaking interventions within the target neighborhoods identified by OP through previous planning efforts and to which grantees are matched. OP is open to specific sites proposed by the curators; sites may include private and/or public buildings and/or spaces.
- Design priority project. Oversee the design of the creative placemaking interventions, including build out/transformation of spaces into showcases for arts, cultural, and creative activities. Any build-out should be innovative and visually engaging and also should reflect an inventive use of as much recycled, re-purposed, or reclaimed materials as possible to reduce costs and waste and to demonstrate creativity.
- Engagement. Each grantee shall design a robust engagement process in collaboration with OP that will occur during the project and is customized to the specific activity and neighborhood context. Engagement is intended to reach a large number of residents and other stakeholders in the District, promote interaction amongst different types of stakeholders, help build community cohesion in diverse communities, and enhance the placemaking experience. Engagement is also critical in terms of eliciting feedback on the placemaking intervention – including its testing of concepts as possible future (and more permanent) approaches – as well as soliciting feedback on the future of the neighborhood and District and facilitating a shared community vision. Grantees are encouraged to use non-traditional approaches for engagement (including social media) to offer multiple platforms and opportunities for

engagement and to design strategies for hard-to-reach populations (e.g. low-income, young, and limited English-speaking residents).

- Selection and curation of creative participants. Select and manage project participants, including artists and other creative entrepreneurs. A minimum of two (2) unique DC-based artists, creatives, and cultural entrepreneurs are required to participate in each creative placemaking project through regular operations or special events. More than two (2) participating creative/entrepreneurs are encouraged but should be balanced with the overall project concept.
- Programming of space. Activities shall focus on arts, cultural, and creative programming that engages with public space and encourages attendees to “cross the street”. The grantees are also encouraged to organize a minimum of one (1) special promotion event for each priority project to promote project participants, integrate creative activities, provide training or education, and draw visitors from and to the neighborhood.
- Successful execution of priority projects, including management of all logistics and activities during the project periods, engagement activities and feedback, and tracking of project metrics.
- Coordination with the local community, businesses and government. The grantee shall coordinate with residents, businesses, community-based organizations, District agencies and other stakeholders in the preparation and execution of the project.
- Marketing and promotion. This will include design and production of electronic and print materials such as promotional postcards, signage, website, blog entries, and e-invitations. Marketing shall include a special focus on neighborhood outreach and District residents, and extend to surrounding jurisdictions as appropriate. Marketing should reach major news media outlets to feature the creative placemaking projects.
- Community notification. The grantee shall inform and as possible collaborate with the appropriate Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) and other active community groups regarding the locations, project concepts and hours of the creative placemaking activities.
- Monitoring, project management, and reporting. The grantee shall be responsible for project monitoring, tracking of metrics and reporting. See Section II.B for more information.

## **II. Creative Requirements**

- OP seeks to support creative placemaking interventions that showcase innovation, placemaking and engagement. Grantees, through Phase I’s project concept development and refinement process, shall identify projects that meet the objectives of the grant and transform public and/or private space on a temporary basis into canvases for creativity and engagement. In Phase II, each grantee shall customize the projects and spaces and promote artist entrepreneurship and community-building in the process. Grantees shall locate and secure approvals for space and buildings, which may be vacant and/or underutilized and appropriate for temporary transformation.
- The creative placemaking projects should not replicate or greatly resemble previous or current projects undertaken in the District. Innovative elements may include a unique theme or selection of artists, special activities/events that take place as part of attracting visitors or engaging residents and local businesses, and generally incorporating aspects that help create a distinctive and creative intervention. Applicants may create a unique title to identify the project.

### **III. Implementation Timeframe**

- Phase I must be **launched by March 1, 2016**.
- Phase II must be **launched by June 30, 2016** and **concluded by December 15, 2016**, including disassembly and removal.
- The duration of the creative placemaking interventions will be determined during Phase I and customized to each neighborhood, project and canvas. Applicants are encouraged to balance the length of time the space is active with undertaking a successful placemaking intervention that includes programming and engagement activities.

## **Section II: Award Information**

### **A. Award Amount**

The maximum amount available per grant award is up to \$125,000, which includes Phase I (project concept development and identification process) and Phase II (project implementation). The funding is available for costs associated with: project planning; curator fees and fees for artists; design, production, installation, and programming; insurance; permitting; leasing of space, operations and maintenance of the project; and project promotion, stakeholder engagement and project reporting. (See Section III.B for ineligible uses).

### **B. Reporting Requirements**

The grantee shall track project objectives and metrics and provide a final report summarizing the project. Required metrics to track include: the number of stakeholders (including community, District agencies and others) participating in the process; the number of local artists and creatives collaborating on the project; and social media, print and other media coverage of the implementation project. In addition, the grantee shall use perception-based indicators such as surveys to gauge the stakeholder/visitor experience of the project. Grantees are encouraged to identify other meaningful metrics relevant to the project. The grantee and OP will collaboratively develop the project tracking metrics. OP expects the grantee to track relevant metrics during both phases of the project.

The grantee shall provide monthly progress reports to OP that include programmatic and financial updates. The grantee also will participate in periodic project management meetings with OP.

The grantee shall provide a final report that will be graphically laid-out and provide a summary of the project activities and processes undertaken, the results and summary indicators of project success, and key lessons learned. The final report shall highlight key components of the project including: how it was creative; how it furthered placemaking; and, how the public was engaged. The report shall be written in a style accessible to: the range of stakeholders and communities engaged; public, private and non-profit partners and organizations; and stakeholders in the creative, design and transportation fields. The final report shall include visual images of the project, which may be supplemented with video coverage of the project and be provided in a manner that can easily be shared online with the public.

In all cases, the grantee shall provide electronic files in their original, editable formats (e.g., Microsoft Word, Adobe InDesign) in addition to static formats intended primarily for distribution (e.g., Adobe Portable Document Format, or .pdf).

## **C. Additional Requirements and Restrictions**

### **I. Grantees are advised of the following restrictions:**

- Any project(s) identified during Phase I for implementation under Phase II must meet the project objectives, considerations and creative requirements identified under Section I as well as relevant eligibility information identified under Section III.
- OP must approve the Phase I approach and process and all projects that will be implemented under Phase II. All projects must be implemented within the District of Columbia.
- OP has discretion over the total amount awarded to each grantee. In addition, OP must approve a line-item budget for each project, including the allocation of resources between Phase I and Phase II. OP will determine the schedule for disbursement of funds for each grantee per the grant agreement.
- The project must meet all District health, safety, and business operation regulations, and the selected curators will be responsible for acquiring all necessary permits (including public space) or licenses. Curators will be responsible for ensuring that any proposed interior location(s) complies with applicable building codes, is in a condition suitable for occupancy by the proposed dates, and has a certificate of occupancy.
- The project must meet performance guidelines including: reporting requirements (programmatic, financial and any special reports); compliance conditions, and project milestones identified by OP. OP reserves the right to cancel the grant if performance milestones are not met. OP must also approve all metrics used for tracking of the project.
- The grantee shall design/format all final documents that are ultimately intended for public release for easy viewing online. The District Government's website standards include posting documents generally in Adobe .pdf format files of modest size, preferably no larger than 4 megabytes. The maximum allowable document size is 10 megabytes. It is the responsibility of the grantee to ensure that document design techniques used when creating the original documents do not result in .pdf files greater than 10 megabytes at publication time. OP will reject documents that are not delivered with .pdf files that meet the District government's web posting requirements.

## **Section III: Eligibility Information**

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

The RFA is open to all professional organizations with site-specific curatorial and/or creative placemaking experience; however, preference will be given to organizations that are located in the District of Columbia. Applicants may form teams.

Specifically, an organization/entity meeting the following criteria is eligible to apply for the Creative Placemaking grant funds under this Request for Applications:

- Demonstrated experience in: the development and promotion of creative placemaking events; curation or selection of creative programs and activities and management of entrepreneurs (artists/creatives); design of unique arts-based experiences; and overall project and budget management as described in Section V.B.

### **B. Funding Restrictions**

Ineligible uses of the grant include:

1. Construction of permanent structures and/or major demolition activities.

2. Operating expenses not related to the implementation of the creative placemaking intervention or the administration of the grant.

## **Section IV: Application and Submission Information**

### **A. Pre-Application Conference**

The Pre-Application Conference will be held on **Monday, December 21, 2015, 10:00am to 11:30am** at the DC Office of Planning, 1100 4<sup>th</sup> Street SW, Suite E650, Washington, DC. To participate via conference call please contact Sakina Khan at Sakina.Khan@dc.gov.

### **B. Application Information**

Six (6) hard copies (one original and five (5) copies) of the application must be submitted in a sealed envelope or package conspicuously marked "Application in Response to Creative Placemaking RFA". Application documents shall be typed in a 12-point font, single space, and all pages must be numbered and labeled with the applicant's name. Applications must be mailed or delivered. Mailed copies must arrive by the due date and time. Electronic applications will not be accepted.

### **C. Application Content**

- i. Cover letter
- ii. Narrative describing demonstrated experience in categories identified in section V.B.i. (maximum of 3 pages of narrative)
- iii. Narrative describing approaches for the project concept development process identified in section V.B.ii. (maximum of 2 pages of narrative)
- iv. Narrative describing approaches for project implementation identified in section V.B.iii. (maximum of 2 pages of narrative)
- v. Narrative describing demonstrated experience and approaches in managerial capacity and project feasibility identified in section V.B.iv. (maximum of two pages of narrative)
- vi. Resumes of key staff (up to five resumes) outlining curatorial and creative placemaking experience
- vii. 3-5 images of exhibits/creative placemaking projects along with curatorial statements/themes from each exhibit
- viii. Current Board list with names and affiliation, if applicable
- ix. Potential applicants must review and comply with the full list of terms, conditions, and requirements listed in Section 7.2 ("Specific RFA Provisions") of the Citywide Grants Manual and Sourcebook available at <http://opgs.dc.gov/book/citywide-grants-manual-and-sourcebook>, and **submit all required information as directed by the Sourcebook as part of this application.**

The applicant may include supplemental application appendices to be used as supporting documentation. Appendices may not total more than ten (10) additional pages. Supplemental application appendices may include, for example:

- Additional staff resumes
- Letters of endorsement
- Reviews or press coverage of previous exhibits/creative placemaking projects undertaken by applicant

### **D. Submission Dates and Location**

Applications are due no later than **4:00 pm on Monday, January 11, 2016**. All applications will be dated and/or otherwise recorded upon receipt. Applications received after the deadline will not be forwarded to the review panel.

Six (6) hard copies of the application must be delivered to:

DC Office of Planning  
Attn: Sakina Khan  
1100 4th Street, SW, Suite E650  
Washington, DC 20024  
(202) 442-7600

#### **E. Contact information**

For further information contact Sakina Khan, Senior Economic Planner, at (202) 442-7600.

### **Section V: Application Review Information**

#### **A. Review Panel**

A review panel will review, score, and rank each application. When the review panel has completed its review, the panel shall make a recommendation for award(s) based on the scoring process. OP will make the final decision. OP reserves the right to reject all grant applications or to reissue the RFA. OP also reserves the right to have applicants present in-person as part of the review process.

The recommendations of the review panel are advisory and are not binding on OP. After reviewing the recommendations of the review panel and other relevant information, OP shall decide which applicants, if any, will receive funds and the amount to be funded.

#### **B. Scoring Criteria**

Applications will be objectively reviewed against the following scoring criteria:

##### **i. Demonstrated Experience in the following categories – 30 points**

- a. Leading a project concept development process related to arts, cultural and creative placemaking projects, including generating, brainstorming and refining project ideas.
- b. Curating and implementing innovative arts, cultural and creative placemaking projects that transform public and/or private space.
- c. Marketing and development of marketing materials.
- d. Organizing and managing special events.
- e. Selecting and managing artists and creatives.
- f. Engaging diverse stakeholders via a range of engagement platforms including non-traditional approaches.

##### **ii. Phase I: Project Concept Development Process – 20 points**

- a. Approach for concept development of projects that then leads to the selection of a priority creative placemaking intervention. Approach should include information on: generating, brainstorming and refining project concepts; engagement of stakeholders; priority-setting and successful project selection.
- b. Understanding of key issues for consideration as part of the project concept development process.



- c. Documented strategies that lead to a successful outcome.

**iii. Phase II: Project Implementation – 25 points**

- a. Approach in implementing a creative placemaking project, including key milestones and decision points, and types of partners.
- b. Understanding of key issues and opportunities as part of the implementation process for a project that is undertaken in Washington, DC.
- c. Understanding of what defines success for a creative placemaking project, and implementation strategies that lead to a successful project.
- d. Approaches for the engagement of local residents, businesses, neighborhood, and other stakeholders via diverse engagement platforms.
- e. Approaches for the marketing and promotion of the placemaking project.
- f. Approaches for special events management and key considerations.

**iv. Managerial Capability & Project Feasibility – 25 points**

- a. Project management approach, quality control, issue resolution and procedures for ensuring that the work of the lead grantee and any collaborating organizations is part of a cohesive strategy.
- b. The applicant has the ability to implement the project as demonstrated in submitted application content. This includes financial solvency and a viable management and operations framework.
- c. Approach for selection of collaborating organizations in regards to project implementation, including the selection and management of artists.
- d. Approach for project reporting, including types of metrics used for tracking temporary arts and creative placemaking projects.

**v. Additional Points – up to 10 points**

The applicant has an opportunity to receive additional points if:

- a. The lead applicant and/or collaborating organizations are DC-based.

**vi. Total maximum Points - 110**

**C. Anticipated Award Announcement Date**

OP plans to announce the selection of grantees in February 2016. This date may change.

Upon Award, OP shall provide the citations to the statute and implementing regulations that authorize the grant; payment provisions identifying how the grantee will be paid for performing under the award; reporting requirements, including programmatic, financial, and any special reports required; and compliance conditions that must be met by the grantee.

**D. Terms and Conditions**

- OP reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications if we determine it is in the best interest of the District government and the Creative Placemaking initiative to do so. OP shall notify the applicant if OP does not select its application. OP reserves the right to suspend or terminate an outstanding RFA. OP reserves the right to issue addenda and/or amendments subsequent to the

issuance of the RFA, or to rescind the RFA. OP may suspend or terminate an outstanding RFA pursuant to grantmaking rules or any applicable federal or District regulation or requirements.

- OP may conduct in-person interviews with applicants during the review process.
- OP shall not be liable for any costs incurred in the preparation of applications in response to the RFA. Applicant agrees that all costs incurred in developing the application are the applicant's sole responsibility.
- OP may enter into negotiation with an applicant and adopt a firm funding amount or other revision of the application that may result from negotiations.
- If there are any conflicts between the terms and conditions of the RFA and any applicable federal or local law or regulations, or any ambiguity related hereto, then the provisions of the applicable law or regulation shall control, and it shall be the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.