IHCDA Crowdgranting Program Guidelines 2026

CreatINg Places
2026 IHCDA Program Guidelines

Program Description

In 2016, the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) in conjunction with Patronicity, developed "CreatINg Places," a place-based crowdgranting program. The goal of CreatINg Places is to assist Indiana communities in funding place-based projects that highlight and improve upon a community's identity and strengths.

"Crowdgranting" combines crowdfunding - the practice of funding a project or venture through small donations from a large number of people, typically via the internet - with a reward-based sponsor matching grant. Crowdgranting is an innovative, yet simple way for non-profit groups to generate public interest in and raise donations for making local improvements. Because it utilizes a web-based donation platform, projects are accessible to anyone with internet access. This tool engages local residents, businesses, and community organizations to play a part in developing community improvements, while also fostering a greater sense of pride as they invest in their surroundings.

CreatINg Places will support projects that activate underutilized public spaces or create new public spaces. The program aims to generate public interest and involvement in the development and implementation of place-based improvements by incentivizing small, public donations with a matching grant from IHCDA, if and when their fundraising goal is reached by a set period of time.

Indiana's ability to retain and attract talent is improved when its communities can develop their unique sense of place, as well as their outdoor amenities and activities. It is IHCDA's and Patronicity's hope that the CreatINg Places program will have positive effects on the lives and well-being of the Indiana communities it serves.

Eligible Applicants

Grants will only be made available to applicants and projects that are determined to be eligible by IHCDA. The CreatINg Places program is available to projects that meet the following criteria:

- The project activates a currently underutilized public space or creates a new public space.
- The project allows free public access at all times or regularly scheduled times in which it offers free public access.
- The applicant is a nonprofit with 501c3 or 501c4 status or is a local unit of government.
- The project development budget is between $10,000 and $100,000. Projects with budgets over $100,000 in total development costs may utilize this program, however all additional funding must be committed prior to applying to the CreatINg Places program.
- The project can be completed and open to the public within one year of receiving IHCDA's funds.

- Projects within historic districts or ones which involve individual buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places may require additional review.
- At least a portion of the project or event must physically activate a new or underutilized public space.
- Applicants and/or closely related project partners with previous CreatINg Places projects must complete and close out existing projects prior to applying for a new project.
- IHCDA gives preference to projects in walkable, easily accessible locations which build vibrancy in small towns and large urban centers
- IHCDA gives preference to fitness and sport courts that have a multi-use component.
- As the mission of the CreatINg Places Program is to activate new or underutilized space, IHCDA will not consider funding campaigns that focus on the maintenance of spaces previously funded by IHCDA that are currently in use. IHCDA will consider project elements that expand spaces to a larger area so that more people can use the space or add a new project element previously not included in the project area (particularly if this element provides new accessibility to community members).

Evaluation Criteria

In addition to meeting the above eligibility criteria, applicants should make sure that their proposed projects have the following project characteristics to be deemed as eligible for funding by IHCDA:
- The project must be well-defined and focused with an explanation of how the project will improve the community and attract visitors to the space
- It must be welcoming and approachable for all members of and visitors to the community
- Exhibit site control in the form of a legally binding agreement to utilize the site
- Applicants must identify a target project start date and target project completion date
- A plan for long-term maintenance of the project
- A documented plan for local and regional fundraising efforts and marketing campaigns, use this workbook for support.
- An explanation of how the project will impact the community and how it relates to prior, current, or future placemaking efforts

Types of Activities Allowed

Successful projects must address or fill an expressed want or need of their community. Prior to submitting an application, there must be established public awareness and local enthusiasm for the project. Project types include but are not limited to the following:
- Streetscape beautification and walkability projects[1]
- Playgrounds (preferences for inclusive and accessible spaces with clear signage about public use)
- Public plaza development/activation

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[1] Public art projects must include a community engagement component

- Access to public amenities (river walks, canoe livery/launches, pier enhancements)
- Farmer's markets, community kitchens, Maker's and incubator spaces, or other pop-up retail
- Alley activations
- Park creation or improvements
- Bike and pedestrian pathways
- Bandshells and amphitheaters
- Community theater rehabilitation (community or non-profit)
- Public space enhancements (wayfinding signage, public Wi-Fi, local branding, interactive educational components, etc.)
- Event implementation[2]
- Other projects that activate a public or community space may be proposed and considered on a case-by-case basis

Eligible projects must have a minimum total development cost of $10,000. Projects at this minimum level would have a fund-raising goal of $5,000, which would be matched with $5,000 in IHCDA funds if their fundraising goal is met.

Projects that do not meet their fundraising goal by the set date will not receive any IHCDA matching grant dollars.

The maximum CreatINg Places grant amount is $50,000, which would require a project to meet their $50,000 fundraising goal to receive the $50,000 grant.

If a fundraising campaign raises more funds than their goal amount, those additional funds can be used to improve their project, however, IHCDA will only match the target amount.

For projects that have both a physical activation and event-based activation in a single campaign, IHCDA's matching grant can only be used for $10,000 of the event activation budget. This is consistent with IHCDA's policy of only allowing a $10,000 budget for event-based activations.

Project budgets can include programming and marketing costs[3], but those expenses cannot exceed 10% of IHCDA's matching grant dollars.

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[2] Any event-based activation of public space will be limited to a $10,000 maximum grant amount. Preference is made to event-based projects that feature multiple scheduled events that take place over at least a 3-month period, especially those utilizing multiple locations/spaces. Established festivals and entertainment series are not eligible.

[3] Programming refers to the consistent use of the space for educational or social activities on a consistent basis. This differs from an event activation, which implies a one-time use or use over several days during a set amount of time.

Projects with total development costs greater than $100,000 <u>are</u> eligible for the CreatINg Places program, however, these projects <u>must</u> have all other prior committed funding[4] sources secured prior to application. Additionally, projects with total development costs greater than $100,000 still must adhere to the CreatINg Places completion timeline (must be complete within one year after receiving IHCDA funds).

Submitted budget needs to be broken down by which expenses will be funded by crowdfunding dollars and which expenses will be funded by IHCDA's matching grant.

For example: Project A: Total project development costs - $30,000
- CreatINg Places campaign goal: $15,000
- Funds raised during campaign: $16,741
- <u>IHCDA matching grant:</u> $15,000
- Total funds available for Project A: $31,741

    Project B: Total project development costs - $160,000
- Prior committed funding: $85,000
- Project funding gap: $75,000
- CreatINg Places campaign goal: $37,500
- Funds raised during campaign: $40,125
- <u>IHCDA matching grant:</u> $37,500
- Total funds available for Project B: $162,625

Site Control Requirements:
- If an applicant to CreatINg Places does not own the **<u>land</u>** on which the project will take place, some additional documentation may be required, including an explanation of why the property owner is not the applicant, and a legally binding agreement with the property owner to utilize the site.
- If an applicant to CreatINg Places does not own the **<u>building</u>** in which the project will take place, there must be a lease agreement in place with a 5-year term or longer. (event-based projects are exempt from this requirement)

Historic District and Floodplain Requirements:
- Project sites that are within historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places may require additional approval from the Department of National Resources, as required with the use of State funds.[5]

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[4] "Prior committed funding" constitutes any funds provided by a project stakeholder (the local unit of government, a non-profit entity, a private source, or other state or federal agencies) which are necessary for the completion of the project and have been committed to the project before or at the time of application to the CreatINg Places program. Prior committed funding is considered separate from the crowdfunding campaign and will not be matched by IHCDA.

[5] If the project is located within a historic district listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it may require additional time for project review prior to approval to launch a campaign. For additional guidance, please contact Patronicity with questions early in your campaign development process.

- Projects with the new construction or rehabilitation of buildings located within a floodplain as defined by FEMA will not be eligible for funding. The eligibility of other projects located within a floodplain will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Crowdfunding Campaign Requirements:

- Applicants will utilize the online crowdfunding system provided by Patronicity whom, along with IHCDA, will provide project development technical assistance, as well as fundraising and marketing assistance.
- Applicants must identify a target campaign start date and target completion date, generally 30, 45, or 60 days after launch.
- Offline donations (checks or cash) can be counted toward the campaign match if received during the campaign or 30 days prior to launch.
- 10% of donations must be processed on Patronicity's website.
- Projects must achieve their crowdfunding goal by the deadline decided upon by the applicant.
- The maximum donation by any one donor or entity to any one campaign is either $10,000 or 35% of the campaign goal (whichever is the lesser amount). Any amount raised above the approved crowdfunding goal is not subject to this requirement. If a donation that exceeds the maximum is made online, you will work with your Patronicity coach to ensure you meet program community engagement requirements.
- Applicants may not donate to their own crowdfunding campaign – donations need to come from the community and community partners.
- The production of promotional videos is not a requirement for campaigns, but this is also recommended, especially for projects with goals greater than $25,000. Applicants will receive guidance on what to include in promotional videos, including language that correctly explains the matching grant component.
- Projects should not announce or advertise their crowdfunding campaigns or their participation in CreatINg Places until their project has been approved by IHCDA, their campaign has officially launched, and their fundraising Patronicity page is "live" to accept donations. You may inform key stakeholders of your interest in the program, but do not share your link with the public prior to launch.

Grant Funds Requirements:

- All crowdfunded and matching grant funds must be used for costs directly related to the project itself. They may not be used to pay for the applicant's organizational or programmatic goals.
- IHCDA will only match donations made by cash, check, or charge; in-kind donations will not be accepted towards achieving the fundraising goal to receive the match. For employer match programs, the donor and project are responsible for collecting donations but can only be counted if received during the campaign dates.

- Projects may use a fiscal sponsor to accept IHCDA funds. Any entity that acts as the fiscal sponsor will be considered by IHCDA and Patronicity as the program applicant and grantee in the event the campaign is successful. As applicant/grantee, the fiscal sponsor must sign the grantee agreement to receive IHCDA matching funds. Any understanding or agreement between the fiscal sponsor and the entity managing the project is entirely between those organizations – the only agreements that IHCDA and Patronicity will have will be with the fiscal sponsor as applicant/grantee. **Fiscal sponsors must be located in Indiana or in the community where the project occurs.**
- All applicants must be ready to implement their project once 100% of total development costs have been raised through crowdfunded funds, IHCDA's matching grant, and all previously committed funds (if applicable).
- IHCDA matching grant funds and any funds raised on the Patronicity platform will be disbursed to the applicant upon the successful completion of their campaign and after documentation of offline donations and a signed grantee agreement is submitted and received.
- IHCDA does not require that projects are competitively bid, but it is highly recommended that applicants do so.

Close-Out Requirements
- To receive IHCDA's matching funds after a campaign is completed and successful, the applicant organization must sign a grantee agreement with Patronicity, stating that they will continue to follow the rules of this program until the project is completed (and in some cases beyond that time). That agreement will be emailed to Patronicity along with copies of offline donations; only after they are received will Patronicity make the request for a project's matching funds.
- Once a project has received IHCDA's matching funds as well as funds raised through online crowdfunding, the project team <u>MUST</u> provide monthly updates from until the project is closed out.
- Project completion must occur within one year of receiving IHCDA grant dollars once the crowdfunding goal is met.
- Projects that are unable to be completed within one year of receiving IHCDA funds must submit a written request for a project extension to Patronicity which includes:
  - A description of what has been completed
  - A brief explanation of the delay
  - Proposed extension date
  - A detailed timeline for completion for remaining project elements
- Within three months of project completion, project leadership must submit before and after photo(s) of the project, a project report and a project budget using templates provided by Patronicity. IHCDA and Patronicity may use photos and written stories in IHCDA-related marketing materials.

- Once the project report, budget and photos are submitted, if IHCDA and Patronicity approve both, the project team will receive a signed letter stating that they have met the requirements for CreatINg Places. Information on expectations for future correspondence will also be provided.
- Although project receipts are not required as a part of close-out, documentation for expenditures and funds received regarding the project should be maintained. CreatINg Places is made possible by state funding and is therefore subject to monitoring in the future.
- IHDCA may request that applicants share their experience by providing marketing materials and/or be asked to present their project in-person or online.

IHCDA Legal Requirements
- IHCDA funds cannot be used to participate or intervene, directly or indirectly, in the campaign of any candidate or political party.
- IHCDA funds cannot be used to or used to publicly criticize, ridicule, disparage or defame any person or institution.
- The applicant covenants that it will not use IHCDA funds in a way to discriminate against person on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital, parental status, familial status, sexual orientation, status as a veteran, physical, mental, emotional or learning disability, or any other characteristic protected by
federal, state, or local law ("Protected Characteristics"). Furthermore, the applicable certifies compliance with applicable federal laws, regulations, and executive orders prohibiting discrimination based on the Protected Characteristics in the provision of services.

Notes on Application Timeline

There is no deadline to apply to CreatINg Places; applications will be accepted on a rolling basis while funding is available. Contact Patronicity with any questions about available funds. Due to the approval process at Patronicity and IHCDA, it normally takes at least a few weeks to complete a campaign page, have it approved and have a campaign ready to launch6 Projects should try to start their campaign pages at least two months in advance of when they want to launch a crowdfunding campaign.

Project Process Workflow
STEP 1 - Tell Us About Your Project
Applicants will utilize the Patronicity website to build out a basic crowdfunding page for their project. This page is the initial application and is directed/focused to the project audience and potential donors. Once a project page is started, Patronicity will contact the applicant.
1. Go to www.Patronicity.com/CreatINgPlaces
2. Click "Apply Now!"
3. Begin filling in your crowdfunding page
4. Wait to receive additional materials from Patronicity staff

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 and its eligibility to the CreatINg Places grant program.

1. Schedule a conversation with your Patronicity coach to discuss your project and campaign plans
2. Complete your crowdfunding page with Patronicity assistance (as needed)
3. Click "Submit for Review" in the top right corner for final Patronicity review
4. Make final adjustments based on Patronicity questions or suggestions

STEP 3 - IHCDA Review

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

STEP 4- Patronicity Polish

If approved by the IHCDA review team, Patronicity will then engage fully with the applicant to polish off the project page, develop a marketing strategy, and build out the crowdfunding campaign. IHCDA review and approval process (up to three days). After approval, finalize plans for crowdfunding campaign

STEP 5- Project Goes Live

Start crowdfunding! Patronicity will provide technical assistance throughout the raise period. The applicant has up to 60 days to achieve crowdfunding toward their goal. This timeline is established on a project basis prior to crowdfunding launch.

STEP 6- Implementation and Reporting

If the crowdfunding campaign is successful, IHCDA will match the funds raised and project implementation can begin. After the project has been complete, the following information is required.

1. Materials for funds disbursement (agreement and donation copies).
2. Use the platform to send monthly updates on project progress.
3. Close-out materials after the project is completed (report, budget and photos).
4. A final letter of approval will be sent when CreatINg Places requirements have been met.