PUBLIC SPACES COMMUNITY PLACES

APPLICATION GUIDE

2026-2027

MICHIGAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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Application Guide 2026/2027
Updated 10/01/2026

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), in conjunction with Detroit-based crowdfunding platform Patronicity, and in partnership with the Michigan Municipal League, has developed Public Spaces Community Places, a creative placemaking and funding program.

Public Spaces Community Places (PSCP) is a grant match program that utilizes donation-based crowdfunding to generate public interest and funding to revitalize or create public spaces. By utilizing web-based donations on the Patronicity platform, projects are accessible to anyone willing to donate in real time. This model we call crowdgranting, engages the public as each person plays a part in achieving place-based improvements and instills community pride as residents become invested in their surroundings.

Placemaking projects are aided by PSCP, which assists the fundraising efforts of patrons through a crowdfunding campaign on Patronicity. This creative funding mechanism mobilizes community members to make individual contributions, with the MEDC providing a grant match ***if*** the campaign goal is reached. Potential projects must focus on the "activation of public spaces creating community places." Michigan's ability to attract and retain young knowledge-based talent is greatly increased by taking advantage of unique placemaking assets in each of our communities, making this funding mechanism even more valuable.

As placemaking projects affect the lives and well-being of entire communities, it is important that they establish public awareness, gain local momentum, and earn the support of their "crowd" to hit their goal and maintain a local landmark.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Municipalities, L3C's, and tax-exempt nonprofit entities are eligible to apply. Nonprofit entities must have an up-to-date Charitable Solicitation License or exemption in place before project launch.

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES ALLOWED

Applications may be submitted for projects that activate public placemaking, or places where people can gather freely and spend time. Before applying for the PSCP program, applicants are encouraged to have established public awareness and local momentum for their project.

Projects that fit this description would include but are not limited to:

- Streetscape Beautification & Walkability
- Public Plaza Development
- Access to Public Amenities (River Walks, Canoe Liveries, Pier Enhancements)
- Farmer's Markets, Community Kitchens, Pop-Up Retail/Incubator Spaces (community or nonprofit)
- Alley Rehabilitation
- Park Enhancements
- Bike Paths & Non-Motorized Infrastructure
- Bandshells & Amphitheaters

- Community Theater Rehabilitation (community or nonprofit)
- Place Branding & Event Implementation
- Any other project that activates public space or a community place

**Any event-based activation of public space will be limited to a $7,500 grant amount. Event-based projects must take place over at least 3 months and at least 4 events must occur. Established festivals and entertainment series are not eligible.

*****For any indoor spaces, regular public programming must be included in the plans, and a portion of the total PSCP funding may be used to provide such programming.**

- **In 2022-2023, we expanded the PSCP program to incentivize Universal Design and Accessibility in placemaking projects across Michigan:**
  - **PSCP will offer additional matching funds, up to $25,000 above the typical $50,000 threshold, for new public space projects that are universally designed. These projects will be required to obtain a letter of support from the Disability Network Michigan or a partner disability advocacy group to qualify for the additional incentive amount.**
  - **The program will now also be available to existing public spaces that are upgrading with Universal Design elements – applicants can request up to a $50k 1:1 match to make these spaces more accessible to all.**
- **All public placemaking projects funded through PSCP are expected to meet all required ADA design parameters and, wherever possible, universal design and accessibility are encouraged.**

GRANT PARAMETERS

Eligible projects must have a minimum total development cost of $10,000, where the recipient will crowdfund $5,000 to receive $5,000 in MEDC matching funds if the fundraising goal is met. MEDC matching grant funds will be available up to $50,000 per project, or a total funding goal of $100,000 needed to complete the space. Exception: projects that incorporate Universal Design and Accessibility may be eligible for additional funding, up to a $75,000 match and raise ($150,000 total), through the PSCP program for new universally accessible spaces. A $50,000 raise and match is available for existing spaces adding Universal Accessibility.

“Prior committed funding” constitutes funds provided by a project stakeholder: the local unit of government, a nonprofit entity, private source, or other state or federal agencies, which are committed to the project scope of work before and at the time of application. All projects are encouraged to have prior committed funding before participating in the PSCP program; however, this is not a requirement for projects under $100,000 in total development cost.

Projects must be able to complete development from previously committed funding and crowdfunded dollars along with the PSCP match. **Projects over $100,000 in total development costs must have all other prior committed funding sources in place and will use the PSCP program to fill the remaining gap in development/build out costs needed to complete the space, up to $100,000.**

The funding secured through this program must be the FINAL portion of funds needed to complete and activate/open the space. See some funding scenarios below. Projects must complete construction and open for public use within one (1) calendar year of receiving MEDC match funds.

Projects may only use this program once per project and project site. If approved by the MEDC for a PSCP campaign, an applicant has only one opportunity to potentially capture the PSCP grant match for the proposed project. If unsuccessful in reaching its crowdfunding goal, an

additional PSCP campaign will not be considered on the same project in the future.

PSCP Funding Scenario 1:

Total project development cost: $120,000
Prior Committed Funding: $70,000
Financial Gap: $50,000

- Patronicity Campaign Goal: $25,000
- MEDC Match, if Patronicity Campaign Goal is achieved: $25,000

PSCP Funding Scenario 2:

Total project development cost: $30,000

- Patronicity Campaign Goal: $15,000
- MEDC Match, if Patronicity Campaign Goal is achieved: $15,000

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Projects will be evaluated on a variety of factors, including, but not limited to:

- A defined and focused project that creates public gathering space.
- The overall impact of the project on the community and placemaking efforts.
- Local financial commitment and documented plan of how to attain the necessary match needed.
- Project location (preference is given to projects connecting to or located in a traditional downtown.)
- Project start and completion date.

OTHER CRITERIA

- Projects must demonstrate the activation of a new or vacant public space or community place. Exception: projects that increase universal accessibility for existing spaces.
- This program is to be used for investments in permanent improvements unless event-based as previously described.
- Projects must hit the crowdfunding target by the 60-day deadline, or else they will not receive the grant money.
- Patronicity will provide crowdfunding support to those awarded through technical and strategic assistance.
- Any individual donor/entity can donate a maximum of $10,000 or 35% of the goal to the raise (whichever is less). At least 10% of your campaign raise must come in through online donations.
- Grant disbursements will be negotiated on an individual basis depending on the needs of the project and community.
    - It is not required that the projects are competitively bid, but it is highly recommended.
- Grants will only be made to an applicant deemed eligible by the MEDC.

PROJECT AND PROCESS FLOW

STEP 1 - Tell Us About Your Project

Applicants will utilize the Patronicity website to start a campaign page for their project. This campaign page acts as the initial grant application. Once a project page is started, Patronicity will make contact with the applicant to set up an initial meeting and vetting call. Applicants will be required to acquire an up-to-date Charitable Solicitation License from the AG's office or an exemption letter.

STEP 2 - Patronicity Review (Same business day as submitted for review)

After the initial vetting call, Patronicity will perform an initial screening of the project and campaign page. Patronicity staff may request additional information to determine the project's appropriateness for crowdfunding.

STEP 3 - MEDC/MML Review (3-business-day review)

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

STEP 4 - Project Goes Live! (at minimum one business week from approval)

If approved, a campaign will prepare a launch date and press release with Patronicity, the MEDC, and MML to go out the day of the launch (allow five business days to coordinate and prepare the release). When that is all set, a project is ready to start crowdfunding! Patronicity will provide technical assistance as needed throughout the raise period.

STEP 5 - Implementation and Completion of the new public space (1 year or less)

If the crowdfunding campaign is successful, the MEDC will match the funds raised, and implementation can soon follow. Reporting is to be completed monthly from the time the campaign ends until the space is fully completed and open for public use through the campaign page, and final reporting documents are due once the project is completed and open. Reporting will be coordinated with and provided to Patronicity.