



PUBLIC SPACES COMMUNITY PLACES

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Adopted by the Michigan Strategic Fund (MSF) Board 1/27/26

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Michigan Strategic Fund (“MSF”), the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (“MEDC”), 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, 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 a crowdfunding platform. This creative funding mechanism mobilizes community members to make individual contributions, with the MSF 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 located in Michigan are eligible to apply. Nonprofit entities must have an up-to-date Charitable Solicitation License or exemption in place before project launch.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Applications may be submitted for projects located in Michigan that activate public placemaking, or places where people gather and spend time. Placemaking means the activation of a new or distressed public space or community place, or projects that increase universal accessibility for existing spaces. 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 include:

- 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)
- Public Wi-Fi
- Place Branding & Event Implementation

Any event-based activation of public space will be limited to a \$7,500 grant amount. Event-based projects must be taking 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. PSCP will offer additional matching funds, up to \$25,000 above the typical \$50,000 threshold, for new public space projects that incorporate universal design elements. Universal design is the design of buildings, products, or environments to make them accessible to all people, regardless of age, disability, or other factors. These projects will be required to obtain a letter of support from a regional disability advocacy group in order to qualify for the additional incentive amount. A list of regional disability advocacy centers can be found at <https://dnmichigan.org/>.

The PSCP program is also 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.

GRANT DOLLARS

Eligible projects must have a minimum total development cost of \$10,000 and the recipient is required to crowdfund fifty (50%) percent of the total development cost. As an example, if the total development cost was \$10,000, the recipient would be required to crowdfund \$5,000 in order to receive any of the \$5,000 in PSCP matching funds. No PSCP matching funds will be provided if the fundraising goal is not met. PSCP 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 elements may be eligible for additional funding up to \$150,000 in total development costs (i.e., \$75,000 crowdfund requirement and PSCP matching funds).

“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 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 the development from prior committed funding and crowdfunded dollars along with PSCP match. Projects that cannot be completed due to insufficient funding are subject to repayment of the PSCP matching funds. Projects over \$100,000 in total development costs are required to have prior committed funding sources in place at time of application and must use the PSCP program to fill the remaining gap in development costs needed, up to \$100,000. The funding secured through the PSCP program must be the FINAL portion of funds needed to complete and activate the space. See some funding scenarios below.

Projects may only use the PSCP program once per project and project site. If approved 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.

Scenario 1:

Total project development cost: \$120,000

Prior Committed Funding: \$70,000

Financial Gap: \$50,000 • Campaign Goal: \$25,000

PSCP Match, if Campaign Goal is achieved: \$25,000

Scenario 2:

Total project development cost: \$30,000

Campaign Goal: \$15,000

PSCP Match, if Campaign Goal is achieved: \$15,000

ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS AND CONDITIONS

- Projects must hit the crowdfunding target within 60 days of the campaign's launch date or else they will not receive the PSCP grant money.
- Project videos are NOT required. MEDC Videography staff has produced a helpful 'How To' video to assist those making a video for their PSCP campaign. Watch that here: [Making an Effective Video: Tips for Public Spaces Community Places Campaigns](#).
- The PSCP Contractor selected by the MSF will provide crowdfunding support to those applicants securing an award of PSCP funding with technical and strategic assistance.
- Any individual donor/entity can donate a maximum of \$10,000 or 35% of the goal to the crowdfunding requirement (whichever is lesser). At least 10% of your campaign raise must come in through online donations.
- Grants will only be made to an applicant deemed eligible under these guidelines and awards will only be given for complete campaigns up to the total amount allocated to the PSCP Program by the MSF Board and new projects will only be considered if funding is available for the entire requested amount.
- Projects must complete project construction within one (1) year of their project start date. Projects that fail to meet this condition are subject to repayment of the PSCP matching funds.

PROJECT AND APPLICATION PROCESS FLOW

STEP 1 - Tell Us About Your Project

Applicants will utilize the [PSCP Contractor's website](#) to build out a basic profile for their project. This profile acts as the initial application. Once a project page is started, the PSCP Contractor will make contact with the applicant. Applicants may be required to acquire a Solicitation License.

STEP 2 - Contractor Review

PSCP Contractor will perform an initial screening of the project and profile. PSCP Contractor's staff may request additional information to determine that the applicant organization is a Michigan based nonprofit, municipality, or L3C; that no fiduciaries or fiscal sponsors exist; and that the project has city/local approvals for the proposed project when/if necessary.

STEP 3 - MEDC/MML Review

If the project passes the initial PSCP Contractor's review, applications will be forwarded to the PSCP review team (made up of the PSCP Program Manager, MEDC Community Development Manager (on behalf of the MSF), and representative from the MML) and screened to verify eligibility with the criteria noted in this document. MSF/MEDC/MML staff may contact the applicant for more information if needed to confirm that the project will create a new public space or activate an underused/vacant public space; ; that funds from a PSCP supported campaign allows for the project to be fully completed and opened for public use; and that funded PSCP projects are able to complete construction within 1 year of receiving the PSCP matching grant funds.

STEP 4 - Project Goes Live!

If a project is eligible under these guidelines, a campaign will prepare a launch date and press release with the PSCP Contractor, the MEDC and MML to go out on the day of the launch. When that is all set, a project is ready to start crowdfunding! The PSCP Contractor will provide technical assistance as needed throughout the raise period.

STEP 5 - Implementation

If the crowdfunding campaign is successful, the MSF will match the funds raised and implementation can soon follow. If the campaign is not successful within 60 days of launch, the amount of PSCP matching funds reserved for that campaign will lapse to the program fund to support additional campaigns.

All PSCP Program awards shall be memorialized by final written agreement with terms and conditions in accordance with these PSCP Guidelines, MSF approval, and any other applicable laws. These terms and conditions shall include, without limitation, requirements governing disbursements, repayment provisions, and periodic reporting to facilitate the MEDC's report to the Michigan Legislature. Reporting is to be completed monthly and final reporting documents are due once the project is completed. Reports shall include, but are not limited to, a timeline and update of project implementation, a project budget, a line-item expense report, and images of the project site. The PSCP Program agreements shall also include a provision for repayment due to breach of the written agreement.