



## **Small Town Enhancement Grant Program**

Web link: <https://www.purelansing.com/smalltowngrants>

Announcement: February 22, 2024

Application release: February 22, 2024

Applications due: May 15, 2024

Award announcements: May 2024

### **Program Goals:**

- To strengthen the economic vitality of small towns throughout the Tri-County area by providing targeted assistance for the improvement and beautification of public spaces, including historic downtown areas, community gathering places, prominently used public parks or, other strategic locations in rural communities. This includes things such as creating and maintaining permanent installations that honor or celebrate small town history and/or agricultural heritage, new public art or restoration of existing piece(s), enhanced lighting, wayfinding signage, or building facade improvements to key centrally located structure(s).
- Projects will be assessed and chosen based on demonstrated need, community impact, financial considerations and timeline constraints.

### **Project Requirements:**

- Projects funded by the Small Town Enhancement Grant are to be substantially completed by January 15th, 2025.
- A permanent plaque / acknowledgment of the project partners and funders is to be displayed as part of the project.
- Awarded participants are to participate in a public media announcement and unveiling event at project location.

### **Guidelines:**

- \$100,000 in total funding
- Minimum request: \$10,000
- Maximum request: \$25,000
- Local matching funds: No match is required, but could positively impact consideration.

**Eligibility criteria:**

- Eligible applicants are intended to be a body of municipal government, including entities such as a DDA, LDFA, etc. Private individuals, businesses, nonprofit organizations are all eligible if and only if applying in partnership with the municipality the project is located in. Counties are not eligible applicants, but could be key partners in an application.
- Given the program's small town focus, project locations must be in a municipality with fewer than 10,000 residents
- Project location must be located in Clinton, Eaton, , or Ingham counties
- If proposed project is for a private building facade improvement, applicant is expected to apply in partnership with building owner and any business tenants involved, with explicit support letter(s) provided.
- Historic downtown areas prominently used public parks or other strategic locations in rural communities. This may include (but is not limited to) public art additions and/or restorations, increased lighting, increased/improved wayfinding signage, and, in some cases, facade improvements made on private businesses located centrally within a community.
- Project must beautify a public-facing space, including but not limited to: downtown districts, public parks, town squares, or, for facade improvements, or an important site in the community
- LEAP strongly encourages collaboration and partnership in this grant project.
- Municipal government may partner with DDAs/LDFAs, small businesses, and other community organizations and partners.

**Consideration Criteria:**

Responses will be scored on the following four key criteria:

- Community impact
- Feasibility (including cost and timeline)
- Creativity
- Partnership, support and collaboration

**Please Note:**

- Only new projects are eligible for funding. Projects already in progress or underway will not be considered.
- All grant-funded projects must be permanent and fixed in type or nature. Temporary "pop up" art or public space activation type projects, event-based or otherwise, are not eligible for this program.
- All improvements must meet all code requirements, including zoning and building and safety codes for your municipality.
- Awards will be disbursed in 3 payments: 50% upon execution of grant agreement, 40% upon receipt of satisfactory interim progress report and final 10% upon receipt of satisfactory final report at project conclusion.

**Timeline/ Application Process:**

- Small Town Enhancement Grant Program will be announced on Thursday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024
- Grant application will be released on Thursday February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024
- In addition to application responses, all applicants will be required to upload a project budget, project timeline and current photo(s) of proposed project location. Letters of support or other documentation are required in certain instances.
- Additional cost documentation like contractor bids, proposals, quotes, and any project renderings are preferred but not required.
- Grant applications will be accepted through 5pm close of business on Wednesday, May 15, 2024
- This is **NOT** a first-come, first-served grant opportunity. We encourage applicants to take the time to thoughtfully and thoroughly complete the application.
- You may submit your application any time before the 5pm deadline on May 15, however, all applications will be considered at the same time following the passing of the submission deadline. Project grant awards are anticipated to be announced by LEAP during the first week of May.

**Approval and Reimbursement Process:**

- All grant project applications will be considered by the Small Town Enhancement Grant Program Review Committee, with a slate then being proposed to LEAP leadership for approval. Applicants will be contacted in writing stating whether the application has been approved, denied or in the case additional information is needed before a determination can be made.

**Disbursement & Reporting:**

- 50% of grant funds will be disbursed upon executed grant agreement.
- Interim report due by October 1, 2024 – trigger for 40% fund disbursement
- Final report due January 15, 2025 – trigger for final 10% fund disbursement

**For more information, please contact:**

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