



LEAP Community Enhancement Grant Program

Application via MEDC RAP Subgrant

CALL FOR PROJECTS AND PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Web link: <https://www.purelansing.com/community-opportunities/grants-and-programs/community-enhancement-grant/>

Application: <https://leap.jotform.com/242874301075353>

Announcement: November 5, 2024

Guidelines Updated: December 2, 2024

General Applications due: Tuesday 5pm ET, December 31, 2024

Façade Applications due: Friday 5pm ET, January 17, 2025

Project Selection notification: January 31, 2025

Grant award announcements: March / April 2025

1) PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

LEAP's Community Enhancement Grant (CEG) program will proactively deploy funding resources across the Lansing tri-county region of Clinton, Eaton and Ingham counties in order to address community revitalization needs by investing in projects that enable population and tax revenue growth through the rehabilitation of underutilized buildings and historic structures, and development of permanent place-based infrastructure associated with social zones and traditional downtowns, outdoor dining, and place-based public spaces.

As a funding mechanism within the **Revitalization and Placemaking Sub-Grant process, in which LEAP is the Sub-Grant fund administrator** for funds available through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), applicants may apply for projects that include public place-based infrastructure projects, or Façade improvement program implementation projects. LEAP will assign a Community Enhancement Grant scoring committee for the review process to select eligible applicants. Selected project leads will be notified by LEAP at the end of January 2025. **Grant funding of all projects is contingent upon LEAP's overall application program funding approval by the MEDC. Applicants submitting applications for the standard RAP Grant through MEDC may not apply for a LEAP Subgrant for the same project.**

2) PROGRAM GOALS

- Strengthen the economic vitality of small towns and communities throughout the Lansing Tri-County Region by proactively addressing revitalization needs and investing in projects that help

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create an environment necessary to: attract and retain talent, add new housing options, enable business creation, enhance business attraction, and provide resources for Michigan citizens and communities.

- Select and prioritize applications that demonstrate clear community needs, maximize positive community impact, are financially viable, adhere to realistic timelines, and provide comprehensive project details.
- Strengthen partnerships with local organizations to ensure meaningful, collaborative community-based projects and outcomes.

3) PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- Applications for projects must be submitted by a local unit of government agency or quasi-government agency that maintains written support of the local unit of government.
- Application narrative must address expected economic development outcomes (private jobs and/or investment) and economic impact on the community.
- Applications must include detailed timeline and budget, quotes from contractors and vendors associated with the project, and should be considered, “shovel-ready,” meaning that all necessary planning, approvals, and permitting is outlined or completed, and project implementation can immediately commence upon grant approval.
- Only new projects are eligible for funding. Projects already in progress or underway will not be considered.
- Applicants are eligible to request up to 50% of the total project cost through the program and must detail the source of remaining project cost funds.
- All grant-funded projects must be permanent and fixed in type or nature. Temporary projects or space activation type projects, event-based or otherwise, are not eligible for this program.
- Improvements must meet all code requirements, including zoning and building and safety codes in the relevant municipality.
- Historic downtown areas that prominently use public parks or other strategic community locations are eligible. This may include (but is not limited to) public park 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, facade improvements or important community sites.

4) FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

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- **\$1,350,000** in total funding for competitive grants across the Lansing Tri-County Region. Given the program focus on placemaking and community space enhancement, project applications will be awarded based on community population as follows:
 - **\$750,000** available for:
 - **communities with population exceeding 20,000 residents; Minimum award request of \$50,000 and maximum of \$250,000**
 - **\$350,000** available for:
 - **communities with population between 5,000 to 19,999 residents; Minimum award request of \$25,000 and maximum of \$100,000**
 - **\$250,000** available for:
 - **communities with population with 4,999 residents and below; Minimum award request of \$10,000 and maximum of \$50,000**
- **Local matching funds:** In accordance with MEDC requirements, a single request must have a minimum request that aligns with the population tiers established above. Project requests must not exceed 50% of the total project costs as applicants must indicate the funding source for the remaining 50% of total project costs.
- **If each category of funds does not allocate the entirety of the designated funds, the remaining funds will be disbursed to the highest scoring project requests regardless of population size. LEAP has the right to re-allocate funds and has final decision-making authority.**

5) APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- **Public Space-based Infrastructure (individual projects):** Entities working on the development of permanent space-based infrastructure associated with traditional downtowns, social-zones, outdoor dining and space-based public spaces.
- These applicants may include but are not limited to: Municipal or economic development organizations such as Downtown Development Authorities (DDA), Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities, local units of government, local Land Bank Fast Track Authorities, or other entities approved by LEAP.
- **Façade or Public Place-Based Infrastructure Subgrant (as part of a funding round):** Economic development organizations and other public entities working to improve the streetscape in traditional downtowns and neighborhood commercial nodes by investing in place-based infrastructure on publicly owned and maintained properties or investing in private building facades through an existing and active local façade improvement program. Counties are not eligible

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applicants but could be key partners in an application. Physical project locations must be within Clinton, Eaton, or Ingham counties.

- **Each community may submit only one application.**
 - **A local unit of government or quasi-government agency may only submit one application; Additionally, the application may contain a detailed breakdown of a façade improvement request alongside a place-based/community enhancement request.**
- If the proposed project is for a private building facade improvement, the applicant is expected to apply in partnership with the building owner and any business tenants involved, with explicit support letter(s) provided detailing the project location, rendering, etc. DDA/Municipal owned properties are also eligible for façade improvements.
- LEAP strongly encourages collaboration and partnership in this grant project. Municipal governments may partner with DDAs/LDFAs, small businesses, and other community organizations and partners. If a façade improvement project, letter of support from building owner, and if community project from private business, prefer community letter of support.

6) CONSIDERATION CRITERIA

During the evaluation process, four key criteria listed below will be integrated into the scoring framework to ensure a comprehensive and balanced assessment:

- Economic and community impact.
- Financial feasibility (including cost and timeline).
- Depth and detail of application.
- Partnership, support and collaboration.

Each of these criteria will be weighed and reflected across different components of the rubric, ensuring that all aspects of the proposal or application are considered fairly and in alignment with the overall objectives. The final score will be derived by evaluating performance across these distributed areas.

7) TIMELINE AND APPLICATION PROCESS

- Community Enhancement Grant program will be announced, and the application will also be live in November
- 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 will reflect positively on your application.

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- Grant applications will be accepted through 5pm close of business on Tuesday December 31, 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 Tuesday, December 31st, 2024. However, all applications will be considered at the same time following the passing of the submission deadline. Selected project leads will be notified by LEAP at the end of January 2025. Grant funding of all projects is contingent upon LEAP's overall CEG program funding approval by the MEDC.

8) APPROVAL SCHEDULE

All grant project applications will be considered by the CEG Review Committee followed by a final decision by LEAP. Recommended projects included in LEAP's grant program application will be submitted to MEDC for approval. Projects will be scored, evaluated and initially selected, at which point project leads will be informed of application status in writing to the email provided within the application. This email will include requests for additional information needed to evaluate applications, important timelines, required actions, and if awarded, reporting requirements and media day coordination.

9) COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

- All application and post-grant communication will be conducted through email using the email address provided in your application. Please be sure to use an email address you check regularly when submitting your application.
- All awarded applicants will participate in a LEAP-coordinated public announcement event at the project site at the time of grant award, and a LEAP-coordinated unveiling event following project completion.

10) DISBURSEMENT AND REPORTING

Grant funds will be disbursed in two payments:

- An initial disbursement of up to 50% of the eligible costs as detailed in the application issued within 30 days of initial RAP Funding disbursement to LEAP.
- A final disbursement of up to 50% of the remaining grant funds upon project completion and receipt and approval of a Project Completion Report. All documentation of eligible expenses and executed contracts must be presented upon project completion.

For more information, please contact:

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