

Memorandum



Date: June 2, 2026
To: Buchanan Downtown Development Authority
From: Tony McGhee
Subject: Application for Event Funding Support

Background

The purpose of this memorandum is to introduce the attached Buchanan Downtown Development Authority Funding Application for the Board's review and discussion. The application is intended to serve as a starting point for how the DDA may want to consider future requests for funding from outside organizations, events, programs, and community groups. The DDA has received, and will likely continue to receive, requests for financial support for activities that take place downtown or are intended to benefit the downtown district. Having a standard application process would help create a more consistent, transparent, and fair way to evaluate those requests.

The purpose of the application is to make sure that funding requests are reviewed in relation to the mission and purpose of the DDA. DDA funds are public funds intended to support the long-term strength, activity, and economic vitality of the downtown district. As a result, requests should be evaluated based on whether they bring people into the downtown, support downtown businesses, encourage additional spending, activate public spaces, promote Buchanan to residents and visitors, and provide a clear public benefit to the district.

The application asks applicants to provide information on the event or program, the amount of funding requested, how the funds would be used, anticipated attendance, expected downtown impact, business participation, marketing plans, event logistics, and how success would be measured. It also includes a post-event reporting expectation so the DDA can better understand whether the funding achieved its intended purpose and whether similar requests should be considered in the future.

The attached document also includes a scoring rubric for the DDA Board to use when evaluating requests. The rubric is intended to help the Board consider applications in a consistent way while still preserving the Board's discretion based on available funding,

timing, community benefit, and alignment with DDA priorities. Criteria include alignment with DDA goals, number of people brought downtown, length of time people are expected to stay downtown, potential for additional downtown spending, downtown business participation, marketing reach, financial leverage, applicant readiness, accessibility, safety, and overall community benefit.

This draft is not intended to be a final document unless the Board is comfortable with it as presented. Staff is bringing it forward as a starting point. If there are questions the Board wants added, removed, or revised, or if there are funding priorities that should be weighted differently, those changes can be made before the application is formally adopted.

Recommendation

It is recommended the Board approve the proposed application with any agreed upon changes to institute a clear process and evaluation criteria for funding requests received by the DDA for consideration.

Attachment A: Application for Event Funding Support

Attachment A





Application for Event Funding Support

Introduction and Funding Priorities

The Buchanan Downtown Development Authority exists to support the long-term strength, activity, and economic vitality of Buchanan's downtown district. The DDA's role is to help create a downtown that is active, attractive, walkable, economically strong, and welcoming to residents, businesses, property owners, and visitors.

DDA funds should be used in a way that advances the purposes of the Downtown Development Authority and the City's approved Development Plan and Tax Increment Financing Plan. These purposes generally include supporting downtown development, preventing deterioration of property values, encouraging private investment, improving public spaces, supporting business activity, increasing pedestrian traffic, and strengthening the downtown as a center of commerce, culture, civic life, and community identity.

The DDA recognizes that events, programs, and community activities can play an important role in bringing people downtown. Because DDA funds are public dollars intended to benefit the district as a whole, funding requests will be evaluated based on their direct benefit to the downtown district and their ability to advance DDA priorities.

Priority will generally be given to requests that:

- Bring people into the downtown district.
- Encourage visitors to stay downtown for a meaningful period of time.
- Create opportunities for additional spending at downtown businesses.
- Support or involve downtown merchants, restaurants, property owners, or community partners.
- Activate public spaces, sidewalks, parks, plazas, trails, or other downtown amenities.
- Market Buchanan's downtown to residents, visitors, and the surrounding region.
- Support the long-term image, vibrancy, and economic health of the district.
- Leverage other funding sources, sponsorships, volunteers, or in-kind support.
- Demonstrate strong planning, accountability, and follow-through.

DDA funding is not intended to replace an organization's own fundraising efforts or support activities that have limited connection to the downtown district. The DDA may approve, partially approve, deny, or request changes to any application based on available funding, alignment with DDA priorities, and the expected public benefit to the district.



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Applicant Instructions

Please complete all sections of this application and attach the required supporting documents. Incomplete applications may be returned for additional information or delayed until a future DDA Board meeting. Submission of an application does not guarantee funding. Any award may be subject to conditions, documentation requirements, reimbursement procedures, or post-event reporting.

Organization Name: _____

Primary Contract Person: _____

Title/Role: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Federal Tax ID/EIN if applicable: _____

Please attached articles of incorporation or IRS tax status with application

Type of organization:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit | <input type="checkbox"/> Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Civic Organization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Event Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Is the organization formally incorporated or recognized as a nonprofit?

- Yes No
- Not Applicable

Has the organization previously received funding from the Buchanan DDA or City of Buchanan? If yes, list the year, amount received, and purpose of the funding.

- Yes No

Year	Amount
_____	_____
_____	_____



Application for Event Funding Support

Section 2: Event, Program, or Project Information

Event Date(s) and Time(s): _____
Location: _____
Setup time: _____
Cleanup time: _____

Is the event/program located within the DDA district? If not fully located within the DDA district, explain how it will directly benefit the downtown district.

- Yes No
 Partially

Is this a new or existing event/program? If existing, how many years has it been held?

- New Existing; Number of years held: _____

Brief description of the event/program/project:



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Who is the intended audience?

Is the event open to the general public? If no, please explain.

Yes

No

Will there be an admission fee or ticket cost? If yes, list the amount.

Yes; Amount: _____

No

Section 3: Funding Request

Total Project/Event Funding: _____
Amount Requested from DDA: _____
Amount Committed from Other Sources: _____
Amount Still Needed: _____

Describe specifically how DDA funds would be used. Be as detailed as possible.



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Requested DDA funds would be used for:

- Marketing/advertising
- Equipment rental
- Security/public safety
- Signage/wayfinding
- Downtown beautification or activation
- Entertainment/performance costs
- Tents/tables/chairs/staging/sound
- Restrooms/sanitation/trash service
- Insurance
- Other

Please attach an itemized budget showing all anticipated revenues and expenses.

Is the organization contributing its own funds to the event/program? If yes, list the amount.

- Yes; Amount _____
- No

Will the event generate revenue? If yes, identify the source of revenue, the projected amount of revenue and how it will be used.

- Yes
- No

Section 4: Downtown Impact

The DDA will give strong consideration to the direct impact the event or program is expected to have on the downtown district. Please provide realistic estimates and explain how the estimates were developed.

Estimated Attendance: _____

Prior Year Attendance: _____

Two Years Ago: _____

Estimated Attendance From Buchanan (49107) _____

Estimated Attendance from Outside Buchanan: (49107) _____

How long do you expect the average attendee to remain downtown?

- Less than 1 hour
- 2-4 hours
- All day/multiple days
- 1-2 hours
- More than 4 hours



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Explain what will encourage attendees to stay downtown before, during, or after the event.

How will the event create opportunities for additional spending at downtown businesses?

Will downtown businesses be directly involved? If yes, list participating businesses and describe their role.

Yes No

Will the event include vendors, food trucks, merchants, artists, performers, or other sellers? If yes, please describe.

Yes No



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Will the event encourage attendees to visit restaurants, retailers, bars, service businesses, or other downtown destinations? If yes, describe how.

Yes

No

Will the event activate a public space, such as the Common, downtown sidewalks, parks, trails, public parking areas, or other civic spaces? If yes, describe.

Yes

No

Section 5: Alignment with DDA Goals

Please explain how the request supports one or more of the following DDA priorities.

Pedestrian activity and walkability:

Support for downtown businesses:



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Marketing and promotion of downtown Buchanan:

Community identity, sense of place, or quality of life:

Use or improvement of public spaces:

Attraction of visitors from outside the community:

Section 6: Marketing and Promotion Plan

How will the event/program be marketed? Check all that apply.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social media | <input type="checkbox"/> Website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Email newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Posters/flyers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paid digital advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Regional tourism/event calendars |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chamber or partner promotion | <input type="checkbox"/> Business cross-promotion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

Describe the marketing plan and timeline.



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What geographic area will the marketing target?

- Buchanan (49107) only
- Southwest Michigan
- Regional audience
- Berrien County
- Northern Indiana
- Other

How will downtown Buchanan and the DDA be recognized in marketing materials?

Will the DDA logo be included on promotional materials if funding is awarded? If no, please explain.

- Yes
- No

Section 7: Event Planning, Operations, and Coordination

Who is responsible for overall event management? (Please attach list key volunteer roles, staff, or committee members involved in planning and implementation.)

Will the event require any of the following?

- Road closure
- Use of public parking
- Sidewalk closure
- Park or public space reservation



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Does the applicant have event insurance or the ability to provide a certificate of insurance if required?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Section 8: Measurement and Reporting

If funding is awarded, the applicant will be expected to provide a brief post-event report to the DDA. This report helps the DDA evaluate whether the funding achieved its intended purpose and whether future requests should be considered.

How will attendance be tracked?

How will the applicant evaluate the success of the event/program?

Will the applicant survey or gather feedback from attendees, vendors, downtown businesses, or partners? If yes, please describe.

Yes

No

Can the applicant provide photos, receipts, invoices, attendance estimates, marketing examples, and a brief written summary after the event? If not, why

Yes

No



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Section 10: Required Attachments

Please attach the following, if applicable:

- Itemized event/program budget
- Event layout or site map
- List key volunteers, staff, or committee members involved in planning and implementation
- Marketing plan or sample promotional materials
- List of participating downtown businesses or partners
- Proof of nonprofit status, if applicable
- Certificate of insurance, if already available
- Prior year attendance or financial information, if this is an existing event
- Letters of support, if available
- Other supporting information

Section 11: Applicant Certification

By signing below, the applicant certifies that the information provided in this application is true and accurate to the best of their knowledge. The applicant understands that submission of an application does not guarantee funding and that any funding awarded by the Buchanan Downtown Development Authority must be used only for the purpose approved by the DDA.

The applicant further understands that DDA funding is public funding intended to benefit the downtown district and that the DDA may require receipts, invoices, proof of payment, photos, attendance information, or other documentation before or after funds are released.

The applicant agrees to recognize the Buchanan Downtown Development Authority in promotional materials when appropriate and agrees to submit a post-event report within 45 days after the event or program is completed, unless another timeline is approved by the DDA.

Authorized Representative Name

Title

Signature

Date



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Buchanan DDA Funding Request Scoring Rubric

Each application may be scored using the following 100-point rubric. The rubric is intended to help the DDA Board evaluate requests consistently, while still allowing the Board discretion based on available funding, timing, community benefit, and alignment with DDA priorities.

Criteria	Max Points	Evaluation Guidance	Score
Alignment with DDA Goals and Public Purpose	15	15 = clearly advances DDA goals, supports downtown development, creates direct public benefit, and aligns strongly with the Development Plan/TIF Plan. 10 = generally supports DDA goals and provides a reasonable downtown benefit. 5 = some connection to downtown, but benefit is limited or unclear. 0 = does not clearly support DDA goals or provide a downtown public benefit.	
Number of People Brought Downtown	15	15 = expected to bring a large number of people downtown, including visitors from outside the community. 10 = expected to bring a moderate number of people downtown. 5 = expected to bring a small number of people downtown. 0 = unlikely to generate meaningful downtown traffic.	
Length of Time People Will Stay Downtown	10	10 = designed to keep people downtown for several hours or throughout the day. 7 = likely to keep people downtown for one to two hours. 3 = brief event with no clear strategy to extend visits. 0 = unlikely to keep people downtown beyond a short stop.	
Potential for Additional Downtown Spending	15	15 = strong likelihood of generating spending at downtown restaurants, retailers, bars, service businesses, vendors, or destinations. 10 = reasonable likelihood of creating some additional spending. 5 = connection to spending is limited or indirect. 0 = unlikely to create additional downtown spending.	



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Criteria	Max Points	Evaluation Guidance	Score
Downtown Business Participation and Coordination	10	<p>10 = directly involves multiple downtown businesses or has a strong plan for business participation and cross-promotion.</p> <p>7 = includes some downtown business involvement.</p> <p>3 = business involvement is limited or informal.</p> <p>0 = no demonstrated involvement of downtown businesses.</p>	
Marketing Reach and Promotion of Downtown Buchanan	10	<p>10 = strong, realistic marketing plan that promotes downtown Buchanan to local and regional audiences.</p> <p>7 = adequate marketing plan with some downtown promotion.</p> <p>3 = limited or unclear marketing plan.</p> <p>0 = no meaningful marketing plan provided.</p>	
Budget, Matching Funds, and Financial Leverage	10	<p>10 = clear, reasonable budget that leverages other funds, sponsorships, donations, volunteers, or in-kind support.</p> <p>7 = generally reasonable budget with some outside support.</p> <p>3 = lacks detail or relies heavily on DDA funding without a strong explanation.</p> <p>0 = incomplete, unclear, or unreasonable budget.</p>	
Applicant Capacity and Event Readiness	10	<p>10 = strong planning, experience, partnerships, and ability to successfully complete the event/program.</p> <p>7 = appears capable, but some details need to be finalized.</p> <p>3 = limited demonstrated capacity or significant unanswered logistical questions.</p> <p>0 = does not demonstrate ability to successfully complete the event/program.</p>	
Accessibility, Safety, and Community Benefit	5	<p>5 = accessible, welcoming, safe, and provides broad community benefit.</p> <p>3 = provides some community benefit, but access or safety details need more work.</p> <p>1 = community benefit is narrow or unclear.</p> <p>0 = unresolved safety, access, or public benefit concerns.</p>	



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Suggested Funding Guidance

Score Range	Recommended Consideration
90-100 points	Strongly aligned with DDA goals; high priority for funding if funds are available.
75-89 points	Good alignment; recommended for funding or partial funding.
60-74 points	Some alignment; consider partial funding, conditions, or request revisions.
Below 60 points	Limited alignment; generally not recommended unless there are special circumstances or additional information is provided.

Additional Board Considerations

In addition to the score, the DDA Board may consider whether the request fits within the current DDA budget, whether similar requests have already been funded, whether the applicant has completed prior reporting requirements, whether the event duplicates another activity, and whether funding the request helps create a balanced mix of downtown programming throughout the year.

The Board may also attach conditions to any funding award, including limits on eligible expenses, required recognition of the DDA, post-event reporting, or coordination with City staff before funds are released.