



Old Post Office Plaza Request for Proposals for 2009 Programming

Downtown Now! is issuing grants of up to \$5,000 for arts and cultural organizations to provide programming for downtown's newest park, The Old Post Office Plaza, from April through October of 2009. This is the Plaza's inaugural year, thus a great emphasis will be placed on quality, creative programming that showcases local talent. Interested parties are encouraged to submit proposals that include a programming plan for a grant up to \$5,000. To find out more about the Plaza, prospective applicants can: attend an open house **at 3p.m. on February 25**; visit the Partnership for Downtown St. Louis' Web site at www.downtownstl.org; and/or request copies of the Plaza brochure and site plan from Patrice Gillespie Smith at pgsmith@downtownstl.org.

Programming Goals:

In an effort to address the diverse entertainment and recreational needs of the various users of Downtown, Downtown Now! seeks to provide programming that:

- 1) Engages the downtown working, resident and visitor audiences
- 2) Highlights downtown's role in the region
- 3) Makes the most of the Plaza's inaugural year
- 4) Explores the Plaza's versatility by using a multitude of media
- 5) Promotes activity throughout the day

Overview of the Plaza

When completed early this year, the Old Post Office Plaza will be Downtown's newest venue for public performances. This unique and intimate space showcases an award-winning design that incorporates extensive landscaping and water features with a sculpture "Torso di Ikaros" by Artist Igor Mitoraj, highlighting the Greek Mythology of Daedalus and Icarus as its focal point. Located at the corner of 9th and Locust, this open space is surrounded by restaurants, hotels, office and residential buildings and truly is in the heart of downtown. Development of The Plaza was identified as a key component of revitalization of the Old Post Office District in the 1999 Downtown Development Action Plan.

Special features of the 30,000 sq. ft. Plaza include: a 5,000 sq. ft. open square, a 700 sq. ft. theatre plateau, a labyrinth complete with numerous benches, cascading steps leading to a basin, a video wall and a dramatic ramp, "Daedalus Rise," leading to a stunning waterfall. All of these effects lend themselves to creative uses. For additional

consideration, the Plaza is WiFi accessible, offers electric hook ups and tent ties for programming needs. An audio/visual system is not included in the Plaza and any audio/visual needs must be addressed by the entity providing programming.

Project funding totals \$8.16 Million and includes support from the Danforth Foundation, the US Bancorp Community Development Corporation, the St. Louis Brownfields Cleanup Fund (via SLDC) and the Gateway Foundation. The Gateway Foundation additionally funded the design fees and will install and maintain the sculpture. Funds for programming are provided, in part, by US Bancorp CDC. Programming will be managed through the Partnership for Downtown St. Louis.

Proposal Submittals

Organizations are encouraged to submit proposals featuring individuals or groups of artists they wish to highlight at the Old Post Office Plaza. All proposals should demonstrate a thorough understanding of the Plaza and outline how the applicant and his/her members intend to use the site to provide programming. Proposals should also include brief overviews of credentials for any proposed artists. A Review Committee will rank the applications and the proposals that most closely address the criteria stated above will be awarded grants.

Proposals cannot exceed 10 pages in length and cannot offer more than 1 page per proposed program or artist included in the application.

All proposals should include the following information:

- A detailed budget for the programming, including A/V costs, marketing, compensating the performers and whether the sponsor organization intends to provide any matching contributions
- Quantity and timing of proposed programs
- Name of the group/organization performing
- Type of programming proposed
- Medium used in each performance
- Target audience for each performance
- A/V equipment needs and how they would be accommodated
- Vehicle for promoting these events

Programming Criteria:

A Downtown Now! Committee will score programming applications based on the following criteria:

- 1) Addresses Plaza goals
- 2) Helps promote Downtown
- 3) Reinforces cultural diversity
- 4) Ease of program execution
- 5) Creativity of the proposed programming
- 6) Willingness to leverage grant dollars and provide the best programming value

- 7) Ability to fill the six months targeted for programming (at various times of the day)
- 8) Organization's history of providing quality programming
- 9) All arts/cultural organizations must be bonded and insured

Review Process:

Downtown Now! will accept proposals until March 16 and will notify grant recipients by March 30. No applications will be accepted directly from individuals; rather they must be submitted by a sponsoring organization familiar with the individual's abilities, history and talents.

Downtown Now! is under no obligation to fund programming proposals in their entirety and may select parts of the programming proposals or allocate resources depending on the number of applicants and the resources available. Upon the award of a grant, Downtown Now! will discuss and confirm with grantees how the grant funds are intended to be used. If either party is dissatisfied with the proposed approach, it may decide to not award or accept the grants.

The **Review Committee** will consist of representatives from:

- US Bancorp CDC
- Gateway Foundation
- Danforth Foundation
- The City of St. Louis
- The Partnership for Downtown St. Louis
- The Community Improvement District of Downtown St. Louis

Timeline:

February 16: The Request for Proposal process opens and prospective applicants can contact Patrice Gillespie Smith of the Partnership for Downtown St. Louis with any questions via email at **pgsmith@downtownstl.org**

February 25, 3p.m.: Open house at the Plaza for all prospective applicants

March 6: The question and answer period closes.

March 16, 5 p.m.: The RFP process is officially closed

March 17: Review of applications begins

March 30, 5 p.m. Successful applicants will be notified of their award.