

# Murals in Private Development Grant Pilot Program

## Guidelines

The City of Rockville is funding a pilot program for murals in private development as a special appropriation for the Fiscal Year 2027 budget. The program can fund three murals up to \$12,500 each, plus a required \$12,500 cash match from the applicant. Qualifying applications will meet the following criteria:

- The applicant must be the property owner, the property manager, or landlord of the proposed site who has the owner's permission to install the mural.
  - The privately owned development must be retail, commercial, or mixed-use.
  - The applicant must have a confirmed minimum 50% cash match in the amount of \$12,500. The cash match may be larger than 50% if the applicant would like to install a mural that would require more funding.
    - An in-kind match may be considered if the in-kind match is for equipment and materials needed to complete the mural. The artist's payment should not be less if an in-kind match is proposed by the applicant.
- The proposed site must be within Rockville city limits and:
  - The site would benefit from artful cosmetic enhancement to improve business, create a welcoming environment, and contribute to the surrounding neighborhood's character.
  - The site must not currently have city-funded public artworks in the larger development.
- The proposed wall for mural display must be public facing and easily seen by people.
  - A description of the proposed exterior wall's condition, orientation, and visibility is required. For the condition of the wall, consider the wall's features, irregularities, construction, surface (painted or unpainted), and overall condition, checking for water damage, rust, dirt on the surface, loose pieces, cracks, etc.
- Community engagement will inform the design of the mural.
- A project schedule with the anticipated installation date of the mural.
- A budget for maintenance to ensure the mural does not fall into disrepair.

- The maintenance budget is in addition to the project budget and is the responsibility of the property owner. Maintenance cannot be included in the budget proposal for the design and installation of the mural.
- A commitment from the artist to participate in the project if the application is selected for funding.
- The artist must be able to meet the June 30, 2027, deadline to install the mural and submit the final report to city staff.

Applications with demonstrated community support are preferable. Support may be included with the application in the form of a letter from a civic or community association and/or group of businesses. The Murals in Private Development grant pilot program may not supplement or increase a developer’s required contribution through the Art in Private Development program.

Applications will be scored using the following criteria:

- Whether the proposed mural contributes to economic development?
- Whether the proposed mural would be an asset by creating a welcoming place?
- Whether the proposed mural has community support?
- Whether the applicant leveraged funds by creating one or more partnerships for the proposed mural?
- Whether the proposed mural is part of a larger improvement plan or has it initiated a larger improvement plan for the site?

(See Appendix A. Application Review Matrix – Murals in Private Development Grant Pilot Program.)

## Guidelines for Murals

### I. The mural:

- must be painted by a local Rockville artist or a regional artist residing in Maryland.
- must have a design that is in compliance with City of Rockville Code Chapter 25 Article 10. Signs, and Article 11. Historic Preservation.
- must be painted onto a publicly facing, exterior wall of the building wall with high-quality, exterior paints, such as Novacolor ([www.novacolorpaint.com](http://www.novacolorpaint.com)), Keim Mineral Paint ([www.keim-usa.com](http://www.keim-usa.com)), or Accolade Latex Paint ([www.prattandlambert.com](http://www.prattandlambert.com)).
- may not include legible text, logos, or trademarked symbols.

- may not include specific commercial products, although it may include generic products such as an automobile, furniture, soft drinks, or other items where the brand is not apparent.
- may not include pictures, symbols, or devices of any kind that relate to a commercial business, product, or service offered on the premises where the wall is located.
- may not endorse a political party, individual, or religious organization.
- must be family-friendly and appropriate for all ages.
- may not be painted on a public right of way or ground surface.

If the site is designated as an historical site, the applicant must obtain a certificate of permission from the Historic District Commission to install the mural.

- II. The proposed artist must have a demonstrated work history successfully designing and installing murals.
  - The artist must have experience with, and be proficient in, cleaning and preparing the exterior building wall for the mural to be painted on, painting the mural to scale, and using materials that are long-lasting and durable.
  
- III. The budget should set aside 30% of the costs for the artist's fee, as well as funds for liability insurance, wall preparation, materials (paint, brushes, rollers, levels, buckets, drop cloth, sealer, etc.), scaffolding, documentation, signage, and maintenance.
  
- IV. A sign of good quality, durable materials must be installed on the exterior wall the mural is painted on and include the following:
  - Artist's name
  - Title of the artwork
  - Materials used to create the artwork
  - A short description of the artwork provided by the artist
  - Attribution /Credit to the City of Rockville using the following language: "This mural was funded in part by the City of Rockville."

After the mural is installed, the grant recipient must include a maintenance plan for the mural as part of the final grant report. Applicants are expected to maintain the mural in good condition for at least ten years.

All documents for the grant application process outlined on the following pages will be submitted electronically through designated online platforms. Any individual with a

disability who would like to receive the information in this publication in another form may contact the ADA Compliance Program Manager at 240-314-8100, or TDD 240-314-8137.

## Helpful Tips and the Process for Submitting a Successful Application

### 1. Attend a Technical Session with City Staff – July 13, 2026.

The Technical Session will be held at 12:00pm on Monday, July 13, 2026, on Webex. The application process and guidelines will be discussed, and staff will be available to answer questions from prospective applicants. Staff will wait until 12:10pm, and if no interested parties attend, the Technical Session will end. This session is not mandatory, however interested applicants are strongly encouraged to attend. Applicants who would like to attend the session must register using the information below:

**Meeting link:**

<https://rockvillemd.webex.com/rockvillemd/j.php?MTID=m4da182a0b0d76a310d0f967caa284922>

Meeting number: 2869 664 1594

Meeting password: JKumpe9Fp42

**Join by phone:** +1-408-418-9388 Toll

Access code: 28696641594

Interested applicants are encouraged to review this request for qualifications before the information session and attend the session to ask questions they may have. All other inquiries about this call's specifications should be submitted electronically, in writing to Anne O'Dell, Arts and Culture Program Manager, at [aodell@rockvillemd.gov](mailto:aodell@rockvillemd.gov). No phone calls other than those requesting a special accommodation through the ADA Compliance Program Manager will be returned. Oral answers to questions relative to interpretation of requirements or the application process will not be binding on the City of Rockville. It is understood that feedback on applications to applicants who are not awarded the project may be helpful. Unfortunately, due to the large number of applications received, individual feedback on applications will not be available.

Any individual with a disability who would like to receive the information in this publication in another form may contact the ADA Compliance Program Manager at 240-314-8100, or TDD 240-314-8137. Letters of Interest and

applications submitted for this grant program must be submitted through the city website and café, respectively, unless an accommodation is made through the ADA Compliance Program Manager. Applications submitted in another manner will not be considered.

**ATTENTION:** Applicants are hereby notified that the city’s website and CaFE’s computer server time may differ from that of other electronic devices, computer software, and computer hardware that may be used to electronically submit the letter of interest and application. Applicants are responsible for allowing adequate time to successfully deliver the letter of interest and application to the city’s website and CaFE by the required date and time. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered for any reason. If an applicant misses the deadline, they are asked not to contact the City of Rockville and ask for the opportunity to submit an application. Properly submitted letters of interest and applications will be reviewed in a virtual environment.

Applicants assume the full responsibility of submitting complete and accurate letters of interest and applications (“materials”) by the deadline and understand that incomplete and inaccurate materials, and materials misrepresenting the applicant’s qualifications, will be disqualified automatically from consideration for the project.

## 2. Find a wall and evaluate its condition using the information above.

Murals may not be painted on public right of ways. Proposals to paint murals on ground surfaces used by pedestrians, vehicles, bikes, scooters, or other methods of transportation will not be funded.

## 3. Submit a Letter of Interest – Deadline August 9, 2026.

The Letter of Interest should be submitted online through the city’s website:

<https://cityofrockville.formstack.com/forms/muralloi>

The letter of interest should describe the location of the site, condition of the surface on which the mural will be painted, how the 50% cash match will be funded, and how the mural would improve the site. Staff may do a site visit to evaluate the condition of the surface on which the mural will be painted. If the letter of interest and condition of the proposed surface show potential for a successful project, the applicant will be invited to apply.

#### 4. Invitation to Apply – September 2026.

Staff will notify qualified applicants if they are invited to submit an application for a grant by September 30, 2026. Applications will be submitted on the City's CaFÉ system and staff will email qualified applicants a link and password to submit their application.

#### 5. Find an artist

At this stage, applicants who are invited to apply will need to show that a qualified artist will work with them on the project. The artist must be a Maryland resident. A proposed mural design is not required at this stage.

Staff will provide a list of qualified artists to applicants. The list of qualified artists is meant to be a supportive tool and is not a comprehensive list. Applicants are welcome to find a qualified artist of their choosing who may not be on the list. Artists selected by applicants will be considered by the grant review panel based on whether they have a portfolio demonstrating they are capable of completing the mural.

Local artists can also be found by contacting local and regional arts organizations, such as Artists and Makers Studios 1, VisArts, Compass Art Center, the Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Arts, or another arts organization.

When you are considering artists, you need to have them provide you with their resume or CV, an artist statement (a description of how they do their work), and a portfolio of work including photographs of at least four murals they have painted in public spaces in the last five years.

Choose an artist who can produce the size mural you would like painted. If you are going to ask the artist to create and submit a design for the mural at this stage, you will need to pay them for their time creating it.

#### 6. Apply – Deadline for applications is November 15, 2026.

The application will require:

- The applicant is responsible for providing funding for the first half of the project. A confirmation of the 50% matching funds is required. Confirmation may be in the form of a letter from the entity providing the matching funds or a statement from the applicant if the applicant is providing the match. If a partnering organization is providing the 50% match, their contact information and email address must be included in the letter confirming the match.

- As previously stated, an in-kind match may be considered if the in-kind match is for equipment and materials needed to complete the mural. The artist's payment should not be less if an in-kind match is proposed by the applicant.
- One pdf document containing:
  - the proposed artist's CV or resume,
  - a link to the artist's portfolio or website,
  - and a written confirmation from the artist that they are available for the project.
- Two photographs of the proposed surface the mural will be painted on.
  - One photograph should be close enough to show the condition of the wall.
  - The second photograph should be at least twenty-five feet from the wall to show the surrounding site. You may take a photograph with a great distance to show as much of the site surrounding the wall as possible.
- One pdf document containing:
  - The size of the mural.
- One pdf letter of support from the residential and/or business communities in and around the proposed site.
- Partnership or Collaboration:
  - One pdf letter confirming a partnership or collaboration, or
  - A pdf document about a potential partnership or collaboration or explaining that no partnership or collaboration will support the project.
- One pdf of a detailed budget that includes:
  - the artist's fee which may be 30% of the total project budget
  - supplies and materials to design and paint the mural
  - the applicant's administrative costs associated with the project

Applications will be scored by a review panel using the following criteria:

- Qualifications of the artist: the artist's portfolio demonstrates their ability to successfully complete murals of the same scale proposed in the application.
- Economic and community development.
- Community support for the project.
- Partnership or collaboration to leverage project funds.
- If the mural is part of, or has initiated, a larger improvement plan for the site.

## 7. Notification of Award

Award notifications will be made by December 31, 2026.

## 8. Award Acceptance

Recipients must notify staff they intend to accept the award by January 15, 2027.

By January 31, 2027, grant recipients accepting the grant must:

- Provide a Certificate of Liability Insurance listing the city as an additional insured with coverage in the amount of \$1,000,000.
- Register as a vendor with the city.
- Sign the grant agreement.

If a recipient does not notify staff they will accept the award by January 15, 2027, they will not be awarded the grant.

## 9. Approval of the Mural Design

Staff must approve the mural design before work can begin on the site to install it. The mural design must be submitted to staff for approval by 11:59pm, March 1, 2027.

## 10. Install the Mural and Submit Final Report

Murals must be installed in time for grant recipients to submit their final reports by June 30, 2027. The final report must include:

- An electronic copy of a maintenance manual for the mural provided to the grant recipient by the artist.
- Photographs of the mural as it is being painted and after the mural is complete.
- Copies of invoices from the artist and proof of expenses covered by the 50% matching funds.
- Submit an invoice for the 50% matching funds from the City of Rockville.

## 11. Help the City Evaluate the Program

Because this program is a pilot, evaluating the program is necessary to determine if future funding will be appropriated. Grant recipients must report the following data over the course of twelve months between July 1, 2027, and June 30, 2028:

### Program Evaluation – Metrics

1. Have businesses in the development seen:
  - An increase in sales

- An increase in customer numbers
  - An improvement in how people interact with the property
2. Have the property owner and businesses received comments from business owners, employees, customers, community members about the mural. If so, what were those comments?

Reporting will be required twice at six-month intervals.

## Who to Contact

This program is administered by the city's Arts and Culture Program. Please email questions to Anne O'Dell, Arts and Culture Program Manager, [aodell@rockvillemd.gov](mailto:aodell@rockvillemd.gov).

## List of Key Dates and Steps

	<b>Date and Time</b>	<b>Step</b>
	Monday, July 13, 2026, 12:00pm EST	Technical Session for Interested Applicants. Session will end at 12:10pm if no attendees are present.
	Monday, July 20, 2026	Portal opens to submit a Letter of Interest.
	Sunday, August 9, 2026 11:59pm EST	Deadline to Submit a Letter of Interest.
	Wednesday, September 30, 2026	Qualified applicants are notified they may submit a grant application.
	Thursday, October 1, 2026	Portal opens to receive applications from qualified applicants.
	Sunday, November 15, 2026 11:59pm EST	Deadline for applications to be received.
	Thursday, December 31, 2026	Applicants are notified of grant award decisions.
	Friday, January 15, 2027 5:00pm EST	Grant recipients must notify staff if they will accept the grant award or not.
	Sunday, January 31, 2027 11:59pm EST	Grant recipients must sign the grant agreement, register as a vendor with the city, and submit a certificate of liability insurance to staff for coverage from February 1, 2027, to June 30, 2027.
	Monday, March 1, 2027 11:59pm EST	Mural design submitted to staff for approval.
	Wednesday, June 30, 2027 12:00 noon EST	Final reports and invoice for grant payment submitted to staff.
	Sunday, February 13, 2028 11:59pm EST	Deadline to submit the first post-grant metrics report to staff for July 1- December 31, 2027.
	Sunday, July 16, 2028 11:59pm EST	Deadline to submit the second and final post-grant metrics report to staff for January 1- July 31, 2028.

Appendix A. Application Review Rubric – Murals in Private Development Grant Pilot Program

Applications scoring nine (9) or more points will be considered for a grant award.

<b>Cosmetic Enhancement Contributing to Economic and Community Development</b>	<b>Selection and Confirmation of a Qualified Artist.</b>	<b>Community Support</b>	<b>Leverage Funds through Partnerships or Collaborations</b>	<b>Improvement Plan</b>	<b>Score</b>
Yes (3 points). The mural would improve the site and greatly encourage traffic to businesses in its vicinity and create a welcoming place.	Yes (3 points). The selected artist has a strong portfolio qualifying them for the project and resides in Maryland.	Yes (3 points). There is strong community support for the mural demonstrated by at least two letters of support.	Yes (3 points). The applicant demonstrated they have confirmed at least one partnership or collaboration to fund the mural project. The applicant is providing a cash match in the amount of \$12,500.	Yes (3 points). The proposed mural project is part of, or has initiated, a larger improvement plan.	
Maybe (2 points). The mural would improve the site, but the site is not in great need of cosmetic enhancement that would encourage traffic to businesses in its vicinity and create a welcoming place.	Maybe (2 points). The selected artist has a portfolio that qualifies them for the project but lacks substantial practice in all aspects of creating a public mural. The artist resides in Maryland.	Maybe (2 points). There is some community support for the mural demonstrated by one letter of support.	Maybe (2 points). The applicant has demonstrated they have a potential partnership or collaboration to fund the mural project. The applicant is providing a cash match in the amount of \$12,500.	Maybe (2 points). The proposed mural project could be part of a larger improvement plan, but that is not confirmed in the application.	
No (1 point). The mural would not encourage traffic to businesses or create a welcoming place because the site is in good condition.	No (1 point). The selected artist does not have a portfolio qualifying them for the project and does not reside in Maryland.	No (1 point). There is no community support for the mural as demonstrated by no letters of support included in the application.	No (1 point). The applicant did not demonstrate they have a confirmed or potential partnership or collaboration to fund the mural project. The applicant is proposing an in-kind match.	No (1 point). The proposed mural project is not part of, or has not initiated, a larger improvement plan.	
				<b>Total Score:</b>	