

The Friends of Downtown Northfield (Friends) are thrilled to offer the [fourth year of the Artists on Main Street \(AOMS\) program](#), a community development initiative exploring the intersection of arts and culture, downtown revitalization, and historic preservation by investing in “creative placemaking” projects. Originally designed and funded by Rethos: Places Reimagined, Springboard for the Arts, and the Bush Foundation, the 2023 program is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund, with additional funding from the City of Northfield’s 1% for the Arts Program.

Creative placemaking has many different definitions, but could be simply described as using art and other creative activities to make positive physical, economic, and social impacts within a particular community or space. The overarching goals of Northfield’s program include:

- Providing art and creative placemaking experiences that draw people to shop, dine and connect in Downtown Northfield;
- Enhancing the downtown’s aesthetics through the creativity of our local artists;
- Utilizing the arts as a springboard for improving diversity and inclusiveness in Downtown Northfield across all cultures.

Our first three years of AOMS funded 17 unique projects, including musical performances, poetry readings, interactive sculpture, spoken word events, pop-up installations, and one large cement shark.

Despite a hiatus in 2022, we are grateful for the opportunity to support our creative community and improve our downtown again this year. The Friends, in partnership with the City of Northfield’s Arts & Culture Commission and the Northfield Arts Guild, encourages all local artists, creatives, and makers to submit a proposal and get involved in this exciting initiative.

### **What is this year’s theme?**

#### **Meet me at the River!**

In addition to the general goals listed above, each year of AOMS highlights a specific theme, prompting applicants to shape their proposals based on relevant or emerging issues within the community. The Cannon River is center stage in downtown Northfield. While the river physically divides the city, it also acts as a magnet drawing the community together to fish, walk, relax, play, and gather along its banks. When our waterways are healthy, we are healthy. We hope that your creative placemaking projects will look to the river, both how we connect to it and how it connects us, as a source of inspiration. In accordance with the

principles of creative placemaking, you should also consider how your project interacts with the physical space where it will take place and the community as a whole – think of adjectives such as delightful, whimsical, surprising, thought-provoking, and so on. Artists are encouraged to also include a tie to resiliency and sustainability into their projects, which could be incorporated into the theme of the project, using recycled/upcycled materials, etc.

### **When are the proposals due?**

Proposals must be submitted by 5:00 pm on Friday, June 23, 2023. Applicants will be notified if they were selected on or before Friday, July 14, 2023.

### **Who is eligible to apply?**

Everyone! Northfield residency is not required, and you don't have to be an established "artist" or creative professional. Anyone with a good idea and a plan to see it through will be considered. If you do not currently reside in Northfield (or even if you do), it will be helpful for your application to describe your connection to the community and how it would influence your proposed project. Collaborating with other organizations such as businesses, nonprofits, schools, etc. is also encouraged and can help maximize the reach and impact of your project.

### **What kinds of projects are eligible for funding?**

As mentioned above, there are no restrictions as to what kind of "art" or "creativity" might receive funding. Visual art, performances, interactive events, residencies, etc. are all fair game, and no idea is too big or too small. While projects are intended to be temporary in nature, proposals for longer-lasting installations will also be considered. For examples of previous projects, please [visit our website](#).

### **Where can projects be located?**

Longer-lasting projects are encouraged to be located in one of the following locations:

1. Pedestrian Bridge (On the bridge, under the bridge, Stairs, etc.)
2. Along the Riverwalk (stairs, wall on west side, Riverwalk, etc)
3. Library patio area
4. Parklets (Farmstead barriers, etc.)
5. Sculpture Pads on Third St (North and South pad)
6. Bridge Square (Barriers, planters, etc.)
7. Ames Park

[Photos and descriptions of the locations are available here](#). However, projects may take place anywhere within downtown Northfield, which is roughly defined as the area bordered by Washington Street on the east, 2nd street on the north, Linden St. on the west, and 7th Street on the south. If your project is not located in one of the identified locations above, you must obtain the proper permissions from property/business owners or the City. Please reach out to [Reeve Needham](#) for assistance. If the location of your project is flexible, note that on your application as well.

### **How much funding is available?**

Applicants can request up to \$5,000 to support their work. The number of projects selected for funding will ultimately depend on the quality of the proposals and the amounts requested. Larger budgets are not necessarily better, as we seek to support a variety of different placemaking projects. Selected projects will receive 80% of their funding up front and the remaining 20% upon completion.

### **How will proposals be evaluated?**

The City of Northfield will establish an independent Public Art Review Committee (PARC) comprised of local artists and arts enthusiasts to recommend proposals based on several criteria, including:

- Potential impact of the project and the extent to which the Northfield community will be involved in the project (as co-creators, participants, consumers, or any combination of those things). Community engagement is a critical part of creative placemaking.
- Strength of proposal's connection to this year's theme and the overall goals of the AOMS program (see above).
- A detailed project timeline and budget describing the cost for necessary materials, artist time/expertise, promotions/advertising, and so on.
- Artists who identify with underrepresented or marginalized communities will be given preference in the selection process.

Complete application details are available online ([click here for the application](#)).

Applications will be accepted in the artist's preferred language. If you need a copy of the application in a different language, please [contact Reeve Needham](#).

### **How long will I have to complete my project?**

Projects must be completed by October 31, 2023. In the spring of 2024, there will be a public dedication event. Please consider this deadline when formulating your proposal. Final

reports will be due by December 30, 2023. Incomplete projects will forfeit the final 20% of their grant award.

### **How can I learn more?**

Program organizers are also happy to provide information and examples about creative placemaking, past successful projects, and answer questions at any time. Please reach out to [Reeve Needham](#) or [Natalie Draper](#).