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Wabash County READI Proposal

Project or Program Contact Information

Project/Program Name	Downtown Programming by Wabash Marketplace Inc.
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Project/Program Contact	Andrea Zwiebel
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Project/Program Contact Email	andrea@wabashmarketplace.org
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Project/Program Contact Phone	(260) 563-0975
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Relationship to Project/Program	Executive Director
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Project or Program Location

Address	189 S Miami St Wabash, IN 46992
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County	Wabash
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Project or Program Details

What type of project/program?	Programming
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What is the duration of the project/program?	Ongoing: 4 years
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Is this a hybrid project and program?	No
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Select project/program focus areas. (You can select multiple)	Downtown Vibrancy
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Share a description of the project/program.

ABOUT:

Wabash Marketplace, Inc (WMI). is a 501(c)3 with the mission of Downtown Revitalization since 1981. "Downtown Vibrancy" is a key indicator for community success and quality of place. WMI is the primary curator of downtown projects and programs for Wabash, Indiana by utilizing the Main Street Four-Point Approach. Key programming includes the Downtown Wabash Cultural District, monthly First Friday street festivals, seasonal Farmers Market, and annual events. Projects include creative placemaking, wayfinding, job postings, downtown campaigns, 1:1 business support, and marketing collateral.

FUNDING:

READI Request for Programming in Downtown Wabash

2021 \$27,000

2022 \$26,000

2023 \$25,000

2024 \$24,000

The amount decreases each year, as we increase private fundraising.

PROGRAMS:

2021 funding will pay for event programming to return after the hiatus from Covid-19. Programs include First Friday, Farmers Market, Sidewalk Sales, Trick-or-Treat Extravaganza, Holiday Night to Remember, Black Friday, Small Business Saturday, and Cultural District Programming. We will use the funds to bring back all events starting in February 2021. All events are presented free of charge to the public. www.wabashmarketplace.org/events

2022 funding will allow a complete overhaul of our downtown brand to better serve our businesses and tourists. We will hire a firm to rebuild our website from scratch to highlight downtown events and products. We will create our own line of merchandise for Downtown. This change will allow us to continue to be the premiere example of rural redevelopment for Indiana. We can maximize our investment towards a full-time marketing professional.

2023 funding will enhance brand recognition in the downtown for the newly designated Wabash Cultural District. Physical signage needs to be enhanced. The wayfinding infrastructure exists--poles, concrete footers, signage. We are going to add additional signage to the infrastructure to designate the cultural district boundaries and amenities. The existing signage is more than five years old and does not include the new designation. We will design printed materials to increase awareness of the Cultural District and distribute 5,000 copies.

2024 funding will pay for growth of our marketing collateral. We want to print a full-color map of Downtown Wabash to push visitor traffic and distribute 3,000+ copies across the community. We will increase online advertising to boost click-throughs to our website by 15%. This includes

targeted ads on social media and Google.

By utilizing events and projects, the programming in Downtown Wabash will create Downtown Vibrancy and quality of place necessary for community growth.

Why is this project/program regionally significant?

Wabash Marketplace, Inc (WMI) is an Indiana Main Street organization. The Office of Community and Rural Affairs recognizes WMI as Tier 3 National Accredited Main Street, the top in the state. Only 18 other communities in Indiana hold this prestigious title. The Northeast Region hosts a bi-monthly conference call of all Main Street organizations. Wabash leads the way for smaller communities in our region such as Decatur and Auburn. Wabash is often asked to mentor rural communities across the state--and nation! In June, WMI presented to Alabama Main Street.

At this time, the State of Indiana does not fund Main Street accreditation. Funding is a barrier for using the Main Street format for downtown vitality.

Additionally, WMI recently led the charge on the state-wide designation for the Downtown Wabash Cultural District. Nearly a dozen communities applied for the bi-annual designation by the Indiana Arts Commission. In June 2021, only two communities were selected through the competitive application--Wabash and Fort Wayne. Both communities are in the Northeast Indiana Region! Our region has exclusive accolades for two years to represent the state of Indiana as the newest districts.

There is a funding barrier. At this time, the State of Indiana does not have a funding model for Cultural District Designations. READI funds could infuse dollars to propel the Downtown Wabash Cultural District.

As a program, WMI provides valuable insight to rural development in the Northeast Indiana Region, and beyond.

Reminder--we are nonprofit with less than five staff members in a city with less than 10,000 residents. READI funding allows us to expand our shoestring budget to accomplish one of the top three priorities, Downtown Vibrancy.

How does this project/program relate to the identified focus area(s)?

Downtown Vibrancy has not been recognized as a type of economic development until recent years. Quality of life and place is now trending in communities across the nation. People want to live, work, and play in a vibrant location.

Wabash recognized this attribute when the national trends emerged in the 1980s. The national Main Street model began in 1980 and Wabash quickly followed in 1981. Wabash Marketplace, Inc (WMI) has dedicated its mission to downtown revitalization for 40 years.

Programming for your downtown is one of the most important elements of Downtown Vibrancy. If there are not reasons for people to gather, then your downtown does not have purpose. Our proposal to fund events and projects over the course of four years will absolutely increase downtown vibrancy.

For example, First Friday is the premier event every month in Downtown Wabash. Thousands of people gather in Downtown to socialize, shop, eat, and explore. Food trucks and vendors line the streets. Live music and kids' activities on every corner. The downtown is alive during the event.
<https://www.wabashmarketplace.org/events.html>

Downtown Wabash is 2.5 miles of walkable terrain. The district is filled with cultural assets such as a world-class performing arts center, miles of community bike trails, numerous public art pieces, new housing developments, and boutiques. The preservation of the buildings in the District is extraordinary, too. The National Register of Historic Places designated Downtown Wabash in 1986 because of its architectural significance. It is a treat for your visual and cultural palette!

What is the project/program timeline?

The timeline is active and programs are in process. The annual event schedule is in place for 2021-2025. The remaining programs are scheduled for 2022-2024.

2021

All events are approved and advertised as of spring 2021. Events received approval by our board of directors, state guidelines, and local board of health. First Fridays occur February-December, 2021. Farmers Market dates are May-September, 2021. Additional events are throughout 2021.

2022

Board of directors to approve the new downtown brand in fall 2021 with public announcement in January 2022. Website elements begin in spring 2022. New merchandise arrives for summer 2022. Full implementation by fall 2022.

2023

January 2023 is reserved for selection of physical signage for the Wabash Cultural District. Design of first-ever marketing collateral for Wabash Cultural District in spring 2023. Install of Wabash Cultural District signage in summer 2023. Distribution of Wabash Cultural District collateral by end of 2023.

2024

Spring 2024 is reserved for research of potential marketing campaigns. Late spring 2024 to design comprehensive full-color map of Downtown Wabash with 2.5 miles of walking terrain. Summer 2024 to distribute 3,000+ copies of the new map across the community. Fall 2024 to finalize targeted ads to increase website traffic. Winter 2024 to close out grant.

List the partners involved in this project/program.

Wabash Marketplace, Inc. (WMI) is governed by a board of directors and four committees. Representatives from across Downtown Wabash are involved. The staff has two full-time employees, multiple part-time positions, and a large amount of volunteers.

Downtown Wabash Cultural District has a committee of partners:

? Wabash County Museum-- engages museum attendees through education and events.

? The Honeywell Foundation, Inc.-- liaison of Arts Midwest and the Indiana Arts Commission, oversees operations of the Honeywell Center, as well as numerous properties in the district, including the Dr. James Ford Historic Home and Eagles Theatre.

? Artist Panel--Erica Tyson, Candie Cooper, Ellen Stouffer, Mary Hettmansperger, Karen Eilts, Schlemmer Brothers Metalworks, artists that live both within and outside the district but supply art to shops, as well as producing local art.

? Visit Wabash County-- focuses on development of tourism increases and interests in the county, headquartered in the district

? Wabash Schools-- continues to keep youth at the center of the planning process, administrative office is located in the district

? Wabash Marketplace-- advances marketing and business practices in the District

? City of Wabash-- advancement of the City and offices in the District

? Grow Wabash County-- involved in statewide and regional organizations, county-wide economic development with offices in the District

? District Residents-- involve those that live in the District in the decision making process

There is a robust mix of businesses, organizations, and individuals to ensure the proposal from WMI is successful.

Project or Program Finances

What is the total amount of READI program funds requested?

\$102,000

Upload a file with project/program finances.

<https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/10990652048>

What is the sustainability of the project/program? Share your 3-year plan.

Wabash Marketplace, Inc. (WMI) celebrates 40 years in 2021! As we approach our mission, we understand that while downtown and neighborhood business districts are no longer the primary providers of goods and services to their communities, a community's core still represents a significant share of its economy- jobs, tax base, municipal investment, and its businesses.

Downtown Wabash is in a favorable position. It has amenities that are not typically found in small, rural towns: Honeywell Center, County Museum, Paradise Spring, River Walk, Carnegie Library, Charley Creek Inn, and YMCA combine to provide us with a peerless advantage as we tackle the task of revitalizing our Downtown. These amenities, together with historic architecture and arts assets, give the Downtown the potential to become a major destination for tourists and their dollars.

The responsibility for the revitalization of the downtown core belongs jointly to the downtown businesses, property owners and the City of Wabash. We are a catalyst to encourage partnership. A collaborative effort, combining the unique skills and vantage points of both public and private sectors, is essential.

Key Principles to Achieving our Mission:

- A well-maintained, vibrant, tourist-oriented downtown is a crucial economic development strategy.
- We need to forge strong partnerships with the City and other organizations dedicated to economic, tourism, and community development.
- We need to focus all efforts on revitalizing Downtown Wabash, both aesthetically and economically. We cannot afford to get distracted with activities that do not drive us toward our mission. The benefits of an improved Downtown will be: Improve the overall image of our City, Attract more visitors and their dollars, Encourage more people and businesses to locate here

3 Year Plan:

Our committees are organized around the "Four-Point Approach" of the National Main Street organization: Design, Economic Vitality, Organization, and Promotion. The Four-Point Approach offers a holistic strategy to downtown revitalization.

Design Committee

Design means creating place to cultivate community and economic development with a visual message. The Design Committee's primary responsibility is executing a comprehensive public art master plan to capitalize on the best assets of Wabash. Beautification is accomplished through a wide variety of design projects including streetscaping and landscaping, primarily in Downtown. The Design Committee is committed to accomplishing the following:

- Assist with Cultural District Integration

- In alignment with Public Art in Wabash: A Roadmap for Creative Placemaking master plan, research projects and partners. Ongoing operational management/maintenance of completed projects.
- Manage outdoor holiday décor for downtown.
- Schedule tree trimming, landscaping, weed removal, as needed.
- Support the Historic Preservation Commission in its efforts within the Historic District by attending monthly meetings.
- Work closely with the City, Street, and Parks Departments.

Economic Vitality Committee

Economic Vitality focuses on capital, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development, and create a supportive environment that drives local economies.

Organization Committee

Organization means getting everyone working toward the same goal. The tough work of building consensus and cooperation among the groups that have an important stake in our Downtown can be eased by using a volunteer-driven program and an organizational structure of board and committees. The Organization Committee's primary responsibilities are raising money, supervising the management of staff and volunteers, promoting the program of work, and managing finances. At times, the Organization Committee serves as the Executive and Finance Committees and is committed to accomplishing the following:

- Increase WMI visibility and presence in Downtown Wabash
- Fulfill the Needs of Business District

Promotion Committee

Promotion means conveying the image and promise of Marketplace to shoppers, investors, new business and visitors. The Promotion Committee's primary responsibilities are marketing both Marketplace and Downtown Wabash, along with event planning. An effective promotional strategy forges a positive image through advertising, retail promotional activity, special events and marketing campaigns. The Promotion Committee is committed to accomplishing the following:

- Branding Next Steps
- Added Value to Merchant Relations
- New marketing hire
- Media & Marketing. Work closely with downtown businesses and organizations to dovetail promotional campaigns, especially Visit Wabash County.
- Programs and Events: Cultural District, First Friday, Farmers Market, Sidewalk Sales, Trick or Treat Halloween Extravaganza, Annual Meeting, Holiday Season, Black Friday/Small Business Saturday.

Conclusion

It will take the collaborative efforts of the staff, Board of Directors, volunteers, and community organizations to accomplish the goals for

Wabash Marketplace. The scope of work is aggressive to continue to drive progress in Downtown Wabash. We are motivated create a beautiful and prosperous downtown for all.

Describe the return on investment for this project/program.

The metrics for Return on Investment will be closely monitored by the brand-new county-wide strategic plan. The plan, called Imagine One 85, is a data driven recovery plan. The plan includes population growth, jobs created, per capita income growth for Wabash County.
<https://imagineone85.org/about/>

Additional, Wabash Marketplace will see a return on investment in Downtown Wabash. Attendance at First Fridays, which translates to consumer purchasing, will increase from 1,000 guests to 1,500 in the peak months. Vendor participation at the Farmers Market will add five new businesses per year--and recruit businesses to become brick-and-mortar. Our small staff will add an additional part-time position by 2023 to grow our marketing and event capacity.

It is important to note that sometimes Downtown Vibrancy has an indirect return on investment.

Project or Program Assets

Share an image of the project/program. (Option 1) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/10990652052>

Share an image of the project/program. (Option 2) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/10990652053>

Share an image of the project/program. (Option 3) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/10990652055>

If you would like to share more images or assets, please share a link to the material here. <https://www.wabashmarketplace.org/>

WORK IN DOWNTOWN

Wabash, Indiana







Wabash Cultural District

A Member of the Indiana
Cultural District Consortium,
A Program of the Indiana
Arts Commission



Project Cost/Budget – Construction Projects (if applicable)								
Description		Cost – Fiscal Year 2021	Cost – Fiscal Year 2022	Cost – Fiscal Year 2023	Cost – Fiscal Year 2024	Totals Per Category	% of Total Expense	
Acquisition/Rights-of-Way Expense		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	#DIV/0!	
Design/Inspection Expense		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	#DIV/0!	
Legal/Financial Expense		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	#DIV/0!	
Infrastructure Construction Cost		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	#DIV/0!	
Building Construction Cost		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	#DIV/0!	
Other Construction Costs		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	#DIV/0!	
Project Construction Expenses Totals per year		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -			
Total Construction Expenses Project Cost (all fiscal years)		\$ -						
Project Cost/Budget – Programs (if applicable)								
Description		Cost – Fiscal Year 2021	Cost – Fiscal Year 2022	Cost – Fiscal Year 2023	Cost – Fiscal Year 2024	Totals Per Category	% of Total Expense	
Downtown Vibrancy	Programming featuring Event Schedule	\$ 119,000				\$ 119,000	24%	
Downtown Vibrancy	Programming featuring Downtown Brand	\$ -	\$ 123,000		\$ -	\$ 123,000	25%	
Downtown Vibrancy	Programming featuring Wabash Cultural District	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 127,000	\$ -	\$ 127,000	25%	
Downtown Vibrancy	Programming featuring Marketing Collateral	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 131,000	\$ 131,000	26%	
Project Program Expense Totals per year		\$ 119,000	\$ 123,000	\$ 127,000	\$ 131,000			
Total Program Expenses Project Cost (all fiscal years)		\$ 500,000						
Funding Source								
Description		Cost – Fiscal Year 2021	Cost – Fiscal Year 2022	Cost – Fiscal Year 2023	Cost – Fiscal Year 2024	Totals Per Category	% of Total Expense	
READI Fund Request		\$ 27,000	\$ 26,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 24,000	\$ 102,000	20%	
Other Funds \$	sponsorships	\$ 17,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 23,000	\$ 26,000	\$ 86,000	17%	
Private/Philanthropic Funds \$		\$ 40,000	\$ 42,000	\$ 44,000	\$ 46,000	\$ 172,000	34%	
Local Government Funds \$		\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 140,000	28%	
Project Income Totals per year		\$ 119,000	\$ 123,000	\$ 127,000	\$ 131,000			
Total Project Income (all fiscal years)		\$ 500,000.00						
Total Project Cost (all fiscal years; Construction Expenses + Program Expenses)		\$ 500,000.00						

Wabash Marketplace, 2021 READI Program Financials