



Activate Rural Learning Lab Call for Projects

Department of Public Transformation seeks 5 rural Minnesota communities to participate in a 2-year Learning Lab for cultivating welcoming and creative places.

The Department of Public Transformation (DoPT) believes in working with artists, cultural workers, and connectors to strengthen rural places by supporting the role of community assets—social, cultural, and built—as a lens to help communities investigate and celebrate their collective story: past, present, and future. From creative taprooms and gathering places to multi-use community hubs and knowledge centers, Activate Rural supports creative building activation projects that inspire, motivate, and open up possibilities for rural communities across Minnesota.

The **Activate Rural Learning Lab** is a cohort-based peer network, workshop series, and resource hub which supports community leaders and artists in cultivating welcoming and creative physical places of connection in rural communities. Activate Rural's artist-led asset activation framework, provides an accessible, replicable, and scalable approach to building design and development for those who have a passion and vision for working with their community.

Learning Lab Details

Selected Building Activation Projects will receive:

- \$25,000 for artist-led community engagement projects and participation stipend
- One-on-one technical assistance
- Supportive cohort peer network
- Project promotion and documentation support
- Access to Activate Rural Learning Lab resource guides and workshops
- Travel and lodging costs for 3 core team members to attend 2 in-person cohort gatherings

Year 1 Activities (April 2023—April 2024)

Apr 2023	DoPT staff visits selected project sites
May 18-19, 2023	Attend and participate in full cohort gathering in Granite Falls, MN
May-Jul 2023	Establish a building activation roadmap for the next 2 years
Jun-Oct 2023	Host a building activation workshop in each community
Ongoing	One-on-one technical assistance; work with local artists to implement creative community engagement activities; 3-4 virtual cohort workshops with guest speakers

Year 2 Activities (May 2024—May 2025)

May 2024	Virtual full cohort gathering
Ongoing	Artist-led community engagement activities continue; one-on-one technical assistance; 3-4 virtual cohort workshops with guest speakers; project promotional support
May 2025	In-person cohort closing celebration (location TBD)

Project Eligibility

Eligible building activation projects are:

- Focused on designing a gathering place for community connection through creativity
- Located in a Minnesota rural community, or Native nation that shares this geography, with a population of around 10,000 or less
- Led by a committed core team of 1-2 artist leads and 2-3 activators (see FAQ for descriptions)
- Safe and viable for active engagement and public events in the idea phase, construction phase, or operational phase (see FAQ for descriptions)
- Moving forward in an identified building currently or soon-to-be under contract or ownership by member(s) of the core team and/or project partner(s) with eligible organizational structures (tribal government, municipal government, county government, 501c3 nonprofit, fiscally sponsored group, cooperative)

Project Selection Criteria

Ideal building activation projects will meet the following selection criteria:

- **Community Connection:** There is a community challenge or opportunity that will be addressed through the building activation project; the Core Team has an understanding of and/or connection to the challenges and opportunities being addressed.
- **Capacity:** There is an active core team meeting, planning, and working together. Core team members commit to participating fully in Activate Rural activities for two years; three team members are able to attend two Activate Rural in-person gatherings; one team member is able to serve as the primary contact to communicate and work regularly with DoPT staff.
- **Readiness:** The building is identified and ready for activation within the Activate Rural 2-year timeline. The application demonstrates enthusiasm for the process and openness to new ideas and approaches.
- **Cohort and Project Diversity:** The selection process will prioritize diversity of geographic locations, populations, project types, and demographics. Projects that are BIPOC-, women- or gender non-conforming-, and LGBTQ2IA+-led will be prioritized in the selection process.

Virtual Informational Session

Thursday, January 26, 2023

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM CST

Virtual session on Zoom; registration required

REGISTER HERE: [DoPT.rsvp/2023ARinfoession](https://dopt.rsvp/2023ARinfoession)

The Activate Rural Call for Projects virtual informational session will provide an overview of the Activate Rural program and the Call for Projects application process. There will be an opportunity for Q&A during the session. Questions submitted in advance via the registration form are appreciated!

→ A recording of the virtual information session will be available on our website after January 26, 2023.

Frequently Asked Questions

It is highly recommended that you review the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) before submitting an application or reaching out to program staff. You may find the answers you seek! To access the FAQ, visit publictransformation.org/activate-rural and scroll down in your browser.

Selection Timeline

Jan 9, 2023	Call for Projects Application Form Opens
Jan 26, 2023	Virtual Informational Session (12-1pm)
Feb 23, 2023	Applications due at 11:59 pm CST
Mar 2023	Selection process and Zoom meetings with finalists
April 3-7, 2023	Applicant notifications

To Apply

To apply, complete the online application form and submit Letter(s) of Support from the legal owner(s) of the building. To access the online application, visit publictransformation.org/activate-rural and click the “Apply Here” button.

Application deadline is February 23, 2023 at 11:59pm CST.

Late applications will not be reviewed.

Questions or Comments

Please contact Sarina Otaibi, Activate Rural Program Director, at sarina@publictransformation.org



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