



**Delta Regional Authority – FY17 Notice of Funding Availability**  
**Delta Creative Placemaking Pilot Initiative**

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Federal Awarding Agency: Delta Regional Authority

Funding Opportunity Title: Delta Creative Placemaking Pilot Initiative

Announcement Type: Notice of Funding Availability

Catalog of Financial Assistance  
(CFDA) Number: 90.201

Due Date: Submit through the DRA Funding Portal  
([funding.dra.gov](http://funding.dra.gov)) by 5:00pm. U.S. Central  
Time on August 21, 2017

Anticipated Date of Notification of  
Award Decisions: September 2017 (subject to DRA discretion)

Beginning Date of Period of  
Performance: Not earlier than September 1, 2017

**Important Dates**

- Notices of Intent to Apply are due **Friday, August 4, 2017 at 5:00pm Central Standard Time**. To submit a Notice of Intent, please see the DRA Website: [www.dra.gov/creativeplacemaking](http://www.dra.gov/creativeplacemaking).
- Applications are due **Monday, August 21, 2017 at 5:00pm Central Standard Time. Partial application submissions will not be accepted.**
- Applications will undergo an internal and external four-week review process.

Awards will be made in September 2017.

- **Disclosure:** Publication of this Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) does not obligate the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) to award any specific number of awards or to obligate any specific amount of funding.

## **FULL TEXT OF NOTICE**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

#### A. Background

The Delta Regional Authority (“DRA” or “the Agency”) is an independent federal agency created by Congress in the “Delta Regional Authority Act of 2000” that serves 252 counties and parishes in an eight-state region: Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee. DRA operates as a federal-state partnership and works with its local development districts by utilizing market-proven processes to improve economic outcomes and enhance the quality of life for the people in its region. DRA makes strategic investments of federal appropriations into projects supporting basic public infrastructure, transportation improvements, business development with an emphasis on entrepreneurship, and workforce development.

Together, the Federal Co-Chairman – who is appointed by the President and confirmed by the U.S. Senate – the Alternate Federal Co-Chairman, and DRA’s Board of Governors, seek to foster local and regional partnerships that address economic and social challenges to ultimately strengthen the Delta economy and quality of life for Delta residents.

### **II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

#### A. Purpose of the Delta Creative Placemaking Initiative (“DCPI”)

Though the 252 counties and parishes served by DRA make up one of the most distressed regions of the country, the Mississippi River Delta region is one of the nation’s most iconic and distinctive places. The region plays a compelling role in our nation’s cultural identity and abounds with rich natural resources and hard-working, innovative people. The Delta not only produces an agricultural bounty that feeds and fuels the nation and the world, but it also boasts unparalleled creativity, evident in its literature,

music, and cuisine.

While other definitions abound, the National Endowment for the Arts suggests that, “Creative placemaking is when artists, arts organizations, and community development practitioners deliberately integrate arts and culture into community revitalization work – placing arts at the table with land use, transportation, economic development, education, housing, infrastructure, and public safety strategies.”

Recognizing the growing importance of quality of place and quality of life in resident attraction and retention, workforce development, business attraction and retention, innovation and entrepreneurship, and economic resilience, the purpose of the DCPI is to encourage municipalities, counties and parishes, local development districts, and other economic development entities to engage more deeply with the region’s arts and culture sectors to spur economic growth in the Mississippi River Delta region and Alabama Black Belt. Through regional collaboration and the formation of cross-sector partnerships, these entities will enhance their collective impact in supporting the quality of place and quality of life in their communities, by strategically integrating the arts and culture within their existing economic and community development strategies and activities.

Ultimately, DRA is poised to support the region’s cultural and creative economies by providing a platform for the arts and cultural sectors to align their efforts with the public sector to assure the rural way of life will continue, as we build more creative, entrepreneurial and inclusive communities.

## B. Program Background

In January 2017, DRA developed a three-phase approach for the DCPI as follows:

- **PHASE I: Creative Placemaking Train-the-Trainer**

In February 2017, DRA hosted staff for a Creative Placemaking “Train-the-Trainer” at the Agency’s Regional Headquarters located in Clarksdale, Mississippi. Collaborative support for this training was provided by senior staff from The National Endowment for the Arts, ArtPlace America, Springboard for the Arts, Art of the Rural, The Rural Policy Research Institute, the Alabama State Council on

the Arts, The Mississippi Arts Commission, and the Alliance for California Traditional Arts, among others.

This training was designed to educate and inform DRA staff of the creative placemaking approach within comprehensive economic and community development strategies.

- **PHASE II: Creative Placemaking Regional Workshops**

The second phase will implement a series of workshops, to be held throughout the Mississippi River Delta region and Alabama Black Belt. The DRA Creative Placemaking Regional Workshops will take place in June and July 2017 in the following locations:

June 26-27 | Paducah, KY

July 10-11 | Vicksburg, MS

June 29-30 | Wilson, AR

July 13-14 | Tuskegee, AL

July 6-7 | Greenville, MS

July 17-18 | Arnaudville, LA

These are designed to more deeply inform local elected officials, local development districts, economic development staff and leadership, and other non-arts sector decision-makers about the creative placemaking approach and the DCPI. It is also intended to provide an invaluable training opportunity for municipal, county/parish, and economic development organization teams planning to submit proposals for DCPI seed investments. As indicated in this NOFA, partnerships submitting investment applications under the DCPI are required to have principals attend at least one of these Regional Workshops.

- **PHASE III: Delta Creative Placemaking Investment Program**

The third phase will implement the Delta Creative Placemaking Investment Program for up to \$309,000 of DRA funding. DRA anticipates awarding up to \$30,000 to successful applicants and up to 50 hours of intensive technical assistance from select DCPI partners and DRA staff to be expended within the project period. Applications shall be received by August 21, 2017 and final awards will be announced no earlier than September 1, 2017.

### C. Funding Priorities

The DCPI program is designed to help communities enhance the quality of place and quality of life by investing in the distinctive local character of Delta places, for positive economic and community outcomes.

The Agency seeks to build the foundations for long-term economic development and to complement other federal and state resources in the region. To support the DRA mission, successful DCPI applications will demonstrate how proposed projects will substantially improve the physical and social character of their towns, cities, or regions, through arts and cultural activities or assets.

DCPI applications shall demonstrate how proposed projects will advance one or more of DRA's funding priorities:

- Basic public infrastructure;
- Transportation infrastructure;
- Business development, with an emphasis on entrepreneurship; or
- Job training or employment-related education, with emphasis on use of existing public educational institutions in the region.

By investing in one or more of DRA's funding priorities, the DCPI program seeks to revitalize Delta downtowns and main streets, support job creation and innovation, and promote diversity and inclusiveness around a shared understanding of arts, culture, and community, in an effort to advance comprehensive economic and community development strategies within the Mississippi River Delta region and Alabama Black Belt.

### D. Performance Measurement

DRA funding and technical assistance provided for DCPI projects will commence on or after September 1, 2017, for a period of up to 24 months. Applicants should allow sufficient time for asset mapping, partnership dialogue and collaboration building, planning, execution, internal evaluation, and project completion/close-out.

DRA's specific intent is to select applicants who are carrying out the Creative Placemaking precepts discussed in the Regional Workshops. This will require careful attention to collective impact approaches, across sectors and jurisdictions, with ample resources and time committed to

building these dynamics. Costs associated with these activities shall be incurred during the requested and DRA-approved period of performance.

### **III. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION**

#### **A. Estimated Available Funds**

DRA anticipates awarding up to \$30,000 to successful applicants, with the total award amount based upon the scale and scope of the proposed activities. DRA reserves the right to alter the award limit for a project, and discretion to only support certain phases and/or specific expenditures.

All DCPI investments require a non-federal match of at least 1:1, but these matching funds must be cash, or a combination of cash and in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions can include staff time from the primary applicant or partnering organization's leadership.

Budget proposals may include matching funds not yet committed at the time of application, but all costs included in the project budget shall be expended within the period of performance outlined in the submission.

### **IV. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

#### **A. Eligible Applicants**

All applications require two primary partners, as defined by the guidelines herein Section IV Part A. Entities that are eligible to apply for DCPI funding include both a primary:

- i. Applicant: Local government entity; and
- ii. Partner: Non-profit entity.

For the purposes of these guidelines, a local government entity is defined as a county/parish, city, town, village, or federally recognized tribal government. Local arts agencies or other departments, agencies, or entities within an eligible local government entity (i.e. a Main Street project) may submit the application on behalf of that local government. The following do not qualify as local government entities: state-level government agencies, other state-designated entities, state higher education institutions, regional governments and entities, quasi-government organizations, regional planning organizations, and business improvement districts.

The primary applicant shall submit no more than two DCPI applications unless prior approval is obtained and approved per DRA discretion.

The other primary partner must be a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) U.S. Organization with documentation confirming at least three years of organization programming prior to applying for a DCPI investment.

One of the two primary entities must be a cultural (arts or design) organization, historical entity, or museum.

Additional (non-primary) partners are strongly encouraged, and may include a variety of appropriate entities such as, but not limited to, arts organizations and artists, state humanities councils, business leaders, community organizations, council of governments, design professionals and design centers, educational institutions and organizations, foundations, non-profit organizations, real estate developers, rural planning organizations, special districts, state-level government agencies, transportation agencies, as well as other public and governmental entities.

All eligible applicants must be applying for projects that operate in or are serving residents and communities within the 252 counties and parishes of the DRA footprint.

\*\*\*For-profit entities, while not eligible to apply directly, are a key component of economic and community development and, in many circumstances, the ultimate beneficiary of the project funding. They can be a partner within a project but cannot serve as the lead applicant for DCPI funding.

\*\*\*Eligible entities owing any type of federal debt are precluded from applying for DRA funding until such a time as the federal debt is paid in full. Should a scenario arise where a federal debt is incurred after a DRA award has been made, any disbursement of grant funds will be swept by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and applied toward the debt. In this circumstance, no further DRA funds will be disbursed and the grantee will be responsible for repaying these grant funds to DRA.

## B. Eligible Projects

DRA plans to support a variety of projects across the Mississippi River Delta region and Alabama Black Belt. Successful DCPI projects will impact

the quality of place and quality of life of Delta communities by advancing local and regional priorities such as infrastructure improvements, job creation, local business development, blight and vacancy, public safety, health, equity, and community cohesion.

Examples of eligible DCPI projects include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Utilizing the arts and culture as a catalyst to revitalize downtowns and main streets;
- Cultural asset mapping, community visioning, and community design dialogues;
- Creative approaches that address community challenges or economic and community development priorities;
- Transformation of a perceived community liability into a community asset, through the arts and culture;
- Development of an arts or cultural business incubator or apprenticeship program; and
- Integrating the arts and culture in the redevelopment/reuse of public spaces (i.e. infrastructure, bridges, districts, plazas, pavilions, etc.).

Creative placemaking projects are often multi-year, community-wide, and large-scale initiatives. DCPI applications shall specify which phase or phases the requested funding will address.

### C. Items Not Funded

The DCPI program shall not fund the following:

- Costs incurred before or after the beginning of the official period of performance;
- General operating or seasonal support;
- Costs for the creation of new organizations;
- Direct grants to individuals;
- Individual elementary or secondary schools – charter, private, or public – directly;
- Commercial (for-profit) enterprises or activities;
- Cash reserves and endowments;
- Costs to bring a project into compliance with federal grant requirements;

- Awards to individuals or organizations to honor or recognize achievement;
- Professional training programs or courses in degree-granting institutions;
- Projects that replace arts instruction provided by an arts specialist;
- Publication of books or exhibition of works by the applicant organization's staff, board members, faculty, or trustees;
- Exhibitions of, and other projects that primarily involve, single, individually-owned, private collections;
- Project costs supported by any other federal funding. This includes federal funding received either directly from a federal agency (e.g., NEH, HUD, National Science Foundation, or an entity that receives federal appropriations such as the Corporation for Public Broadcasting or Amtrak); or indirectly from a pass-through organization such as a state arts agency, regional arts organization, or a grant made to another entity;
- Alcoholic beverages;
- Gifts and prizes;
- General miscellaneous or contingency costs;
- Contributions and donations to other entities;
- Fines and penalties, bad debt costs, deficit reduction;
- Social activities such as receptions, parties, galas;
- Lobbying;
- Marketing expenses that are not directly related to the project; and
- Audit costs that are not directly related to a single audit (formerly known as an A-133 audit).

## V. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Eligible applicants shall adhere to the following guidelines in submitting DCPI applications:

### A. Submission Date and Time

#### i. **Notification of Intent to Apply**

Notification of Intent to Apply are due **Friday, August 4, 2017 at 5:00pm Central Standard Time**. To submit a Notice of Intent, please see the DRA website: [www.dra.gov/creativeplacemaking](http://www.dra.gov/creativeplacemaking).

#### ii. **Application Submission Deadline**

Applications will be reviewed beginning **Monday, August 21, 2017**.

Award notifications will be given by September 2017, after a four-week period of Partner Review, Clarification Period, DRA Internal Review, and Risk Assessment Evaluation.

**B. Other Submission Guidelines**

Prospective respondents will have the opportunity to submit written questions via e-mail to clarify any uncertainties that may exist. All questions must be submitted via e-mail to [aholland@dra.gov](mailto:aholland@dra.gov). All questions shall be marked “DRA NOFA – Delta Creative Placemaking” in the e-mail subject line.

To provide equal treatment of respondents, all questions and corresponding answers will be posted on [www.dra.gov/creativeplacemaking](http://www.dra.gov/creativeplacemaking).

**i. Submission of Required Documents**

As a component of the DCPI application, all applicants are required to upload the following documents into the DRA Funding Portal ([funding.dra.gov](http://funding.dra.gov)):

1. **Map/Photos.** Include granular maps and/or photos indicating the location of the proposed activities that will help reviewers not from your area understand exactly where the proposed activities will take place. Describe your project’s geographical boundaries in the narrative.
2. **Letters of Support.** All applicants must submit no less than three, and no more than five, letters of support or evidence of community support (i.e. highest ranking official or principal of the organization). Please combine all letters into one document.
3. **Corporation Annual Report.** All non-profit organizations with 501(c)3 status must upload the organization’s most recent annual report.
4. **IRS 990/Audit.** All non-profit organizations with 501(c)3 status must upload the organization’s most recent IRS 990 or independent financial audit.

5. **Bylaws.** All non-profit organizations with 501(c)3 status must upload the most recent copy of the organization's Bylaws.

## **VI. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

Applications shall provide a well-designed plan with clear and compelling justification for receiving DRA funds to support creative placemaking projects. Reviewers will assess applications against the selection criteria below and rate them accordingly, so it is important that sufficiently detailed responses to each criterion are provided. Understanding the key program requirements, as described previously in this NOFA, will help develop a competitive grant application.

### **A. Criteria**

The following criteria will be evaluated for each application:

- Does the application address the specific stated goals of the DCPI program?
- Do the submitted materials clearly indicate the commitment of the primary applicant and other primary partner to this proposal?
- Do these organizations, and the other partners identified in the application, have the capacity, technical expertise, community support and artistic/cultural competencies necessary to design, develop and execute the proposed project?
- Is there sufficient competence within the cultural/art/design organizations to achieve artistic excellence and project completion?
- Does the vision for this project, and the stated outcomes, enhance the quality of life, social and economic diversity, community inclusiveness and overall cohesion?
- Does the proposal reflect creative approaches which address future community plans, priorities and challenges?
- Where appropriate, does the proposal address the needs of underserved populations, including those whose experience of the arts have been limited by geography, ethnicity, disability, class or poverty?
- Is the scale and scope of the proposed project feasible, appropriately funded, and capable of on-time completion?
- Will the community at large be adequately engaged, to assure the longer-term sustainability of the enterprise?
- Were appropriate evaluation metrics, documentation, and dissemination processes identified, and can they be executed by the partner organizations?

## B. Review and Selection Process

The assessment of applications involves a wide range of considerations. DRA will engage external and internal (staff) reviewers with relevant knowledge and expertise to provide insight and input on the eligible applications. Ultimately, the review and selection process will produce a diversified set of high-quality projects that represent the selection factors described in this NOFA.

### i. **Stages in the Review Process**

Informational Sessions – Informational sessions about the DCPI, DRA, the NOFA, funding priorities, and this application process are offered by phone, webinar, or in-person meetings on an ongoing basis. The dates for these information sessions can be found at [www.dra.gov/creativeplacemaking](http://www.dra.gov/creativeplacemaking).

Partner Review – Applications received are provided to DCPI partners to review. DCPI partners will score applications and provide feedback to DRA staff in advance of DRA Internal Review.

Clarification Period – DRA seeks to cultivate successful project models and maintains discretion over the allowance of applicants in need of additional assistance and adjustment to their application, to be provided a period of clarification. During this period, feedback will be shared with the applicant, allowing them to adjust their application before final submission.

DRA Internal Review – Final review and determinations on the application are made by DRA staff utilizing feedback provided during the review process, and considering resubmitted applications following the Clarification Period.

Risk Assessment Evaluation – DRA staff will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each applicant, including conducting due diligence to ensure an applicant's ability to manage federal funds and the applicant's past performance (if applicable.) This evaluation is in addition to the evaluation of the applicant's eligibility for funding and the quality of its application based on the selection criteria. Results from this evaluation will inform funding decisions. In evaluating risks, among other factors, DRA may consider the following:

- Financial stability;
- Quality of financial management systems and ability to meet the administrative standards;
- History of performance as reflected in the applicant’s record in managing previous DRA awards;
- Reports and findings from single audits performed under OMB Circular A-133 and findings of any other available audits;
- IRS Tax Form 990;
- An applicant organization's annual report; and
- Publicly available information including information from an applicant organization's website.

Project Award Announcements – Successful applications and denials will be provided notice by September 2017.

ii. **Selection for Funding**

Successful DCPI applicants will be awarded the following:

- Up to \$30,000 of DCPI funds (total amount is contingent upon DRA discretion); and
- Up to 50 hours of intensive technical assistance from select DCPI partners and DRA staff to be expended within the project period.

C. Feedback to Applicants

Following DCPI awards, compliant applicants will receive summary comments from the review. This feedback will be based on the review of the original application and will not reflect information that may have been provided during the Clarification Period.

D. Transparency in Delta Creative Placemaking Initiative Investments

DRA is committed to transparency in its investments. The following information for applications will be published on the DRA website within 90 business days after all grants are awarded:

- A list of compliant applications submitted; and

- A brief project narrative summarizing successful applications.

## **VII. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **A. Federal Award Notices**

DRA will make awards following the project selection announcement. DRA anticipates announcing the results of this competition by September 2017. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions via e-mail. This notification is not an authorization to begin award activities. The Notice to Proceed Letter signed by the Federal Co-Chairman of DRA is the authorizing document for award activities. Unsuccessful applicants will also receive a notification that their application was not approved for funding.

An awardee shall not expend federal award funds until the start of the project period identified on the Notice to Proceed Award. It is anticipated that successful DCPI applicants will receive awarded funds on a reimbursement basis as approved by DRA over the course of the project period. DRA reserves the right to amend this if determined that pre-award costs may be necessary on a case-by-case basis.

### **B. Other Information**

Appropriate portions of successful proposals may be incorporated into the contract between the applicant and DRA and shall be a matter of public record subject to disclosure under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C.A. § 552, As Amended By Public Law No. 104-231, 110 Stat. 3048.

DRA will have the right to use all ideas, or adaptations of those ideas, contained in any proposal received in response to this NOFA. Selection or rejection of the proposal will not affect this right.

DRA shall not, under any circumstances, be responsible for any cost, or expenses associated with this proposal including, but not limited to, research, investigation, development, preparation, duplication, production, collation, packaging, delivery, transmittal, or presentation of the proposal or any related information, data documentation and material. Costs for developing any proposal will be the sole responsibility of the respondent

whether or not any award results from this solicitation. DRA will not provide reimbursement for such costs.

The respondent is prohibited from making multiple proposals.

DRA may withdraw or cancel this NOFA any time prior to the award of a contract. DRA may amend this NOFA by issuing a notice of amendment prior to the opening of proposals. In unusual circumstances, DRA may postpone a proposal opening in order to give sufficient time to respond to an amendment.

DRA reserves the right to request necessary amendments, reject any or all proposals received, or cancel this NOFA, according to the best interest of DRA. DRA also reserves the right to waive minor irregularities in proposals provided such action is in the best interest of DRA.

Where DRA may waive minor irregularities, such waiver shall in no way modify the NOFA requirements or excuse the respondent from full compliance with the NOFA specifications and other contract requirements if the respondent is awarded the contract.

Institutions must warrant that no sums or anything of value has been or will be paid directly or indirectly to any officer or employee of DRA such as wages, compensation, or gifts in exchange for acting as officer, agent, employee, subcontractor, or consultant to the institutions in connection with any work compensated or performed.

DRA cannot and does not make any representatives or warranties with regard to the information, data, documentation, and material conveyed in this NOFA or otherwise provided by DRA. Institutions shall conduct their own independent investigations and analysis and make their own assessments, judgments, and decisions regarding this opportunity.

Some of the contents of this NOFA and the response submitted may be incorporated by reference in any final contract resulting from this NOFA.

The contract created as a result of this NOFA and the accepted response will be made under, and shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Mississippi.