

**“Making Trenton Even Better”
I Am Trenton 2026 Grant Round
Downtown Trenton DTTN Grant Opportunity
NJ250 Trenton Special Projects**

ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST

- **ALL applicants (including former applicants and grantees) MUST attend a Grant Workshop prior to applying**
- **Projects take place in or directly impact the Downtown Trenton Neighborhood (Creek to Canal, Rt1 to Old Barracks) – See map**
- **Grant/project activities will be implemented between March 1 and Dec 31, 2026**
- **Projects related to New Jersey’s upcoming 250th Anniversary will be prioritized (you can learn more about NJ250 here <https://visitnj.org/nj250>)**
- **Applicant has not been awarded 3 or more times in the last 5 years**
- **If previously awarded, applicant is current on all reporting requirements for past grant awards**
- **Application deadline is March 1st, 2026 at 11:59PM**

BACKGROUND

[I Am Trenton Community Foundation](#) was established by a group of Trentonians in 2007 to make Trenton even better through community engagement, building pride in our city, and community-focused giving. Our grants support projects designed and led by Trenton residents to make our community better. We believe in putting resources on the ground and investing in Trenton’s own changemakers. The majority of the projects we fund are designed, led, and accomplished by Trentonians to address issues and opportunities in their community.

Downtown Trenton (DTTN) Grants:

Since 2014, we have been collaborating with local nonprofit Isles, Inc. to provide grants in specific Trenton neighborhoods, where the NJ Department of Community Affairs (DCA) provides funding to support resident-driven plans as part of the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC) program.

I Am Trenton - Making Trenton Even Better 2026 DTTN Grant Cycle

grants@iamtrenton.org

The Downtown Trenton (DTTN) Neighborhood Grants support community projects, arts, culture, beautification, and business development in the “downtown” neighborhood which is bordered by the Assunpink Creek and D&R Canal – also called “Creek to Canal, Rte 1 to Old Barracks”. See the map at the end of this document for the outline of the project area. Funded projects must occur within the identified boundaries of this area and must benefit residents of this area. Note that this grant round is a geographic expansion from prior grant rounds that had been limited to just the Old Trenton Neighborhood.

WHO CAN APPLY

Note: We prioritize projects led by residents and grassroots organizations. Large/established nonprofits or businesses may apply but are unlikely to be funded unless it is for a compelling project led by residents in the neighborhood, and a clear reason is presented why the organization cannot secure funding for the project from its regular sources.

We will prioritize projects designed by and led by Trenton residents and people with lived experience related to the project. All applicants must be able to demonstrate strong ties to Trenton and be able to engage Trentonians in the work/project.

Eligible applicants: must be located, impact or have a project location within the DTTN geographic boundaries

- Individuals or unincorporated organizations with a fiscal sponsor that is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit
- Individuals or unincorporated organizations without a fiscal sponsor – grant income will be considered taxable income by the State of NJ & IRS. We require a W9 with either an EIN or SSN to issue each grant.
- 501(c)(3) organizations with priority given to less resourced organizations that have great ideas but are still building the internal capacity and experience to attract traditional foundation grants.
- Registered small businesses located in the downtown area or creating a new location in the downtown area.

Special Eligibility Note

- All former grantees (from any grant round) must have submitted final reports before this application deadline and have complied with requirements of former grant cycles to be considered in this grant round. (2024 Citywide and DTTN final reporting deadline: December 6th, 2025; 2025 Citywide midterm reporting deadline: April 30th 2026, final reporting deadline: November 6th, 2026)

GRANT AMOUNTS & GRANT PERIOD

DTTN

- Applicants may request **up to \$10,000**. We expect most grants to be between \$7,000 and \$10,000. A total of \$115,500 will be available.
- Grant implementation period is from May 1 – December 31, 2026

SUMMARY OF GRANT PRIORITIES - Details & Examples (See Appendix A for additional details)

DTTN
Grant Priority: Economic Development
Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Upgrading business practices/products/menus to attract visitors during NJ250 celebrations and beyond● Improve appearance and perceived safety of downtown area to encourage visitors to return in future
Grant Priority: Welcoming Guests to Trenton’s Unique History & Art Community
Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Activities attracting customers, residents and visitors downtown during the NJ250 celebrations by highlighting Trenton’s unique role and history● Creative activities supporting local artists and advancing goals of Creek to Canal Creative District Plan during the NJ250 celebration period with special focus on summer/fall of 2026

HOW TO APPLY

Full application details appear at the end of this RFP (Appendix B). All final applications must be submitted through the online form at iamtrenton.org/grants/downtown-trenton **We will not accept emailed or print/mailed applications.**

- We accept applications in Spanish and English.
- Applicants may submit the Project Details portion of their application as a short essay OR as a short video in English or Spanish. A simple video of you answering the listed Project Details questions is sufficient - we are not looking for fancy editing.

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS March 1st, 2026 AT 11:59 PM

WE DO NOT FUND

- Projects or organizations that discriminate on the basis of age, race, gender, national origin, ethnicity, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.
- Debt reduction or on-going operational support
- Capital campaigns or fundraising events
- Re-granting programs
- Scholarships
- Partisan political activities, lobbying, or efforts to influence an election
- Religious activities such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytizing. Religious organizations can apply for non-denominational activities that are open to all and do not require participation in religious services.

TIMELINE

1. Pre-application workshops

- **ALL APPLICANTS must attend a workshop before submitting an application for this round. If you do not attend a workshop, your application will be considered ineligible for funding. Register at iamtrenton.org/grants/downtown-trenton**

Workshop Locations, Dates, and Times:

In Person:

East Trenton Center, 601 N Clinton Ave Trenton, NJ 08618

- Saturday, January 17th, 2026; 10:30-11:30 am
- Saturday January 31st, 2026; 10:30-11:30 am

Via Zoom:

Link will be sent upon registration

- Wednesday January 21st, 2026; 6:30-7:30 pm
- Thursday January 29th, 2026; 6:30-7:30 pm

2. **Deadline to apply – March 1st, 2026 at 11:59PM Eastern Time.** Please submit all materials through the online form at iamtrenton.org/grants/downtown-trenton
3. **Notification of awards** - We will notify all grantees on whether their application was funded or not **by April 17th, 2026.**
4. **Check presentation and celebration:** We will award checks to grantees at a celebration the week of **April 27th, 2026.** Details will be shared with grantees once finalized.
5. **Funded projects/activities** must occur between **May 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026**

HOW WE CHOOSE WHICH PROJECTS ARE FUNDED

Applications are reviewed by the Grants Committee which includes I Am Trenton board members, volunteer community members and others who believe in and support Trenton's grassroots resilience. Reviewers score each application individually, then discuss all the applications in the pool. We prioritize funding projects at the amount requested, but we may approve a grant for a lower amount.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEES

If your project is funded, you should expect the following:

Grant Agreement and W9: Grantees will be required to sign a grant agreement with I Am Trenton Community Foundation. For applicants with a fiscal sponsor, the grant agreement will be between IAT and the fiscal sponsor. We also require a signed W9 form with an EIN or SSN to issue each grant.

Please note that DTTN projects over \$2,000 may receive two installments of funding: one at the start of the project, and the second after a progress report due no later than September 5th (see below).

Reporting :

- We ask that grantees document their project activities through photos, short videos, etc. and share them with IAT
- Grantees will submit a midterm report no later than **September 5th, 2026**. Report instructions and link will be provided to grantees directly by email.*
- Grantees will submit a final report no later than **January 8th, 2027**. Report instructions and link will be provided to grantees directly by email.*
- We may ask grantees to prepare short presentations about their projects for a public event during the grant period. Details will be provided once finalized.

***It is imperative that accurate contact information is provided in your application for reporting purposes. Please be sure to include an email address that is regularly monitored for important grant and reporting related information.**

HOW TO REACH US

Feel free to contact the I Am Trenton Grants team at any time throughout the application process or as you carry out your grant activities. **For Spanish communications, please email us and leave your name and phone number and we will call you back.**

- Email: grants@iamtrenton.org
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APPENDIX A – GRANT PURPOSES DETAIL WITH EXAMPLES

Downtown Trenton (DTTN) – Limited to Downtown Area as indicated (see map & description)

The DTTN Grant Program aims to make Trenton’s downtown neighborhood more livable and vibrant, as envisioned in the Creek to Canal Creative District Plan. Grants will be accepted in two categories:

Economic Development –

- Upgrading business practices/products/menus to attract visitors during NJ250 celebrations and beyond
- Improve appearance and perceived safety of downtown area to encourage visitors to return in future
- Support for new and emerging businesses located in Downtown (see map) that will enable them to scale up, expand their work, or be a more active and welcoming presence in the neighborhood. A business not currently located downtown will only be considered if the project is specifically to establish a downtown location for the NJ250 celebrations.
 - Sample projects in this category include improving the exterior space of a business; adding lighting, seating, etc. to add a better street feel; new equipment that enables the business to expand; doing new types of marketing; getting a new storefront in the neighborhood; etc. Also, projects that link a business location or services to the history of Trenton would be a priority. This list is not exhaustive. Prospective applicants should come to the pre-application workshops (see above) or to email us with questions.

Welcoming Guests to Trenton’s Unique History & Art Community –

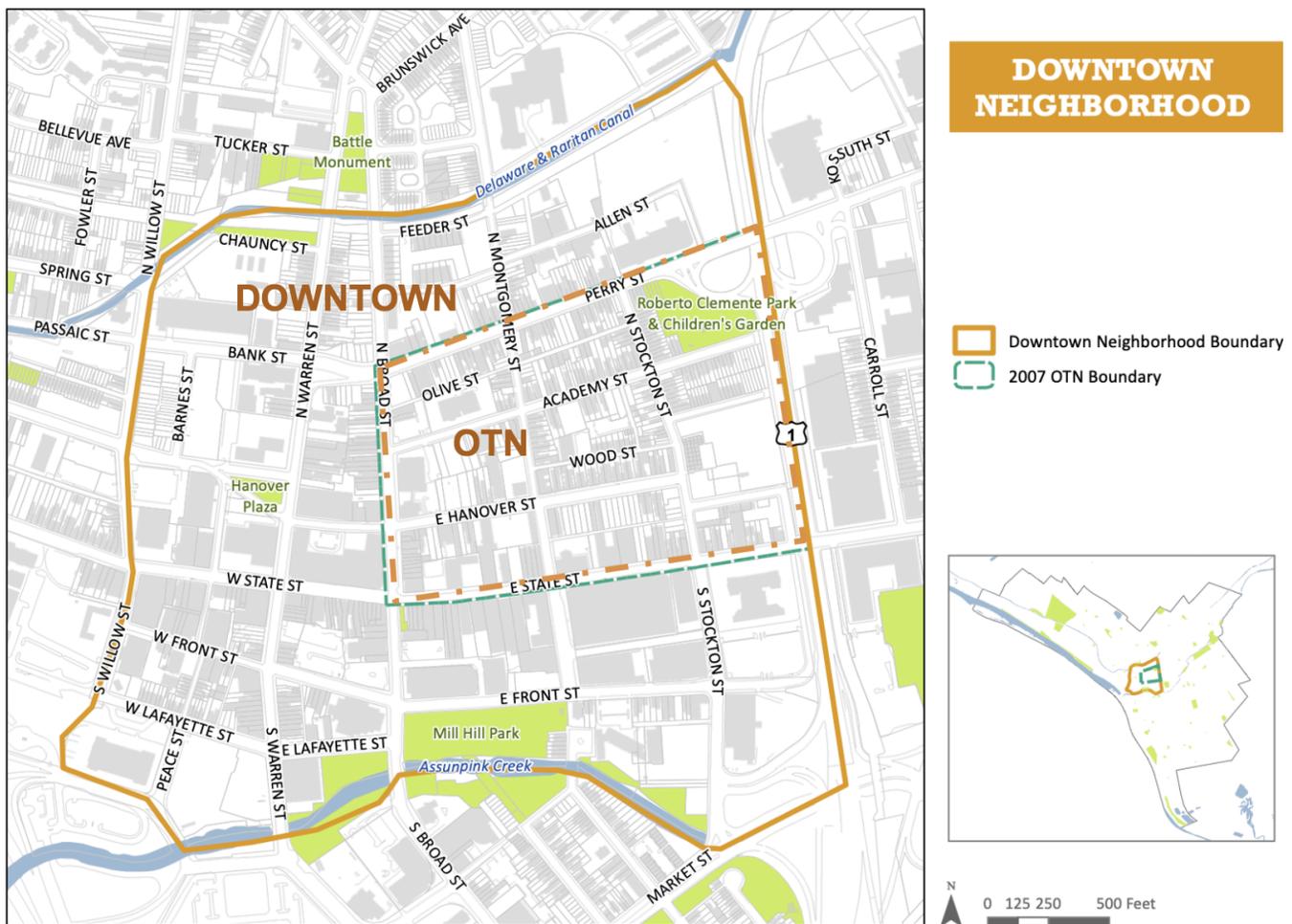
Organizations not located in the DTTN area may apply under this category. However, priority will be given to organizations in the area and all activities must take place in Downtown.

- Activities attracting customers, residents and visitors downtown during the NJ250 celebrations by highlighting Trenton’s unique role and history
- Creative activities supporting local artists and advancing goals of Creek to Canal Creative District Plan during the NJ250 celebration period with special focus on summer/fall of 2026
- Activities that will make the downtown area (see map) more welcoming, attractive, vibrant, **and engage visitors in Trenton’s history during the NJ250 celebrations**. We will prioritize projects that advance the goals in the Creek to Canal Creative District Plan, which aims to create more art and cultural activities in the neighborhood and to strengthen artists and creative organizations. Generally, we will also prioritize projects that create something permanent (an art installation, a new community space) or involve cumulative learning (an educational series on some aspect of Trenton’s History) rather than one-time events (a cleanup, a single workshop), unless the applicant makes a strong case for the event’s cultural importance to the NJ250 celebrations.

- Examples include creating a mural with some involvement of residents; organizing neighbors to do beautifications on multiple properties on a block; organizing a cultural festival; a series of art workshops for kids; etc. This list is not exhaustive. Prospective applicants should attend the pre-application workshops or to email us with questions.

PROJECT BOUNDARIES – Downtown Trenton Neighborhood

DTTN projects must occur and involve businesses/residents within the solid orange border shown in the map below.



APPENDIX B – APPLICATION SAMPLE

All applications must be entered & submitted online at iamtrenton.org/grants/downtown-trenton

Applications will NOT be accepted by hard copy, mail, or email. The following are questions/examples provided for reference as you prepare your application.

THE DEADLINE IS March 1st, AT 11:59 PM

PLEASE NOTE: ALL applicants must attend a Grant Workshop before submitting an application. You may begin drafting your application prior to attending a workshop, however, to be considered eligible for funding, you must complete a workshop BEFORE you submit to ensure all application criteria are appropriately met.

APPLICANT INFORMATION/ INFORMACIÓN DEL SOLICITANTE

Applicant name/ Nombre del beneficiario:

Please enter the **legal name** of the entity that would receive the grant funds if your project is selected for funding./ Por favor, introduzca el **nombre legal** de la entidad que recibiría los fondos de subvención si su proyecto es seleccionado para su financiamiento.

Applicant Information/ Información de contacto del solicitante

Please enter the email, phone, and mailing address of the applicant. / *Introduzca el nombre, el correo electrónico, el teléfono y la dirección postal de la persona de contacto.*

Applicant type/Tipo de solicitante: Which category best describes you? /¿Qué categoría te describe mejor?

Please pick the category that best describes your status as an applicant. Depending on the category you select, you will need to provide additional information and the listed documents.

- **An individual or unincorporated organization WITHOUT a fiscal sponsor Required information and documents:** *If you are awarded a grant, you will be required to fill out a W9 form providing the name and SSN of the individual receiving the funds.*
- **Registered business Required information and documents:** (1) EIN of business, (2) Business registration certificate (3) Authorization/contact info*
- **A 501c3 nonprofit organization Required information and documents:** (1) EIN of nonprofit, (2) IRS letter confirming 501c3 status (3) Authorization/contact info*
- **An individual or unincorporated organization WITH a fiscal sponsor Required information and documents:** (1) EIN of fiscal sponsor, (2) IRS letter confirming fiscal sponsor's 501c3 status, (3) Authorization/Fiscal Sponsor letter & Contact info*

***Authorization/Fiscal Sponsor Info** - You will be asked to upload a signed letter from the Owner, Executive Director or Board Chair authorizing the submission of this grant proposal in the applicant's name and that the

contact person listed is to be the main person with whom we will interact about this submission. The letter must reflect the specific name of the authorized project and the authorized contact person. Fiscal sponsors must include the name of the organization/person implementing the project

Grant History/ Historial de subvenciones

Have you received an I Am Trenton Downtown/Old Trenton grant in any of the previous 5 years? / *¿Ha recibido alguna subvención de I Am Trenton Downtown/Old Trenton en alguno de los últimos 5 años?*

Yes/No answer to identify new applicants

PROJECT SUMMARY / RESUMEN DEL PROYECTO

Project Title/Titula Del Proyecto: Give us a short, specific title

Project Summary/Resumen del Proyecto: Please describe your project in one sentence. If your project is funded, we will use the title and short description in press materials and on our website.

What amount are you requesting/Cantidad? (check guideline for grant program): _____

Project Category/Categoria del Proyecto: Please pick the category that **best** describes your project and is part of the grant program you selected at the beginning of the application.

DTTN grants:

____ Economic Development

____ Welcoming Guests to Trenton’s Unique History and Art Culture

Project Location/Ubicacion: Give us your primary address/site/park/building where the project will occur . It **must be** in the creek to canal area.

PROJECT NARRATIVE/ DETALLES DEL PROYECTO

Please provide short, clear answers to the following questions in **either** a written document (maximum 2 pages) **or** a short video (maximum 3 minutes). **Please UPLOAD the document/video below.**

1. **Who are you?/ ¿Quien es usted?** - Tell us about yourself, your organization/group, and any key partners. What do you currently do, and what past experience or success has informed your project?
2. **What will you be doing? / ¿Que estara hacienda?** - Please describe your project. How did you come up with the project? Describe project activities, timeframe, and details. Please be clear if any of your activities will take place outside of Trenton. How will residents be engaged in the project?
3. **What will you achieve? ¿Qué lograrás?**

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Please explain how your project will make Trenton even better. What is the specific impact or improvement for Trenton? How many Trenton residents will your project impact? Make sure your answer here matches the project categories chosen above.

4. Why do you need support from I Am Trenton? / ¿Par que necesita nuestra ayuda?

Please describe why a grant from I Am Trenton will make a real difference for you. For example, if there are challenges you have faced in getting funding to support this specific work, or if there is a unique opportunity you are trying to take advantage of, please discuss that here.

BUDGET/ EL PRESUPUESTO

Please upload a budget that lists the specific expenses for proposed project/activity. An example budget for a hypothetical community information campaign is shown below. We need to know what you will spend the I AM TRENTON grant funds on. We do not need your entire agency budget, just the project you are proposing here.

SAMPLE BUDGET TEMPLATE – REQUIRED FIELDS*

Expenses*	Amount*	Source of funds*	Status of funds* (Confirmed, Requested, etc.)
Artist fees - poster and pamphlet designs (\$100 x 4)	\$400	IAT	Requested
Printing - posters	\$200	IAT	Requested
Printing - pamphlets	\$200	Partner Name	In-kind; confirmed
Stipends - community members to host Facebook Live sessions	\$500	IAT	Requested
Translation - Spanish	\$250	IAT	Requested
Poster / pamphlet distribution	\$300	Volunteers	In-kind; confirmed
Total project cost*	\$1,850		
Total requested from I Am Trenton*	\$1,350		

PHOTOS / FOTOS

Please upload up to three photos that can help us understand who you are and what you propose to do. This can be examples of a past project you did, and/or images that show an issue you're aiming to fix. If your grant is approved, we may use these photos in press materials and on our website so please make sure you own the image. **Please DO NOT use logos or event flyers.**