APPLICATION

Please review guidelines before submitting an application. Applications must be received at info@bia.bc.ca no later than 5:00 pm PST on March 15, 2024.
No extensions will be given.

Applicant Information

Organization: Downtown Courtenay B.I.A.

Contact: Tracey Clarke

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Project Information

Project Title: Downtown Courtenay Poetry Walk

Project Timeframe: April 2023

Category:

- [ ] Community Leadership
- [x] Events and Marketing
- [ ] External Relations / Public Relations
- [ ] Organizational (Operational) Excellence

Values:

- [x] Innovative
- [x] Sustainability
- [x] Relationship Building

Project Overview

Brief Description (maximum 500 words):

The Poetry Walk is an innovative barrier-free marketing initiative featuring Downtown Courtenay (DCBIA) as a walkable cultural destination. Set during National Poetry Month, this event is a collaboration between Artful: The Poets, DCBIA, and a local artist. We created a unique destination installation of original poetry handpainted on BIA merchant windows. This can be experienced on a walking tour, whether folks experience one or two poems as they go about their day-to-day business or make an event of visiting Downtown to tour the whole installation.

April is National Poetry Month. To celebrate, the Canadian League of Poets selects a theme for year; 2023 was “ JOY ” . This aligned with the DCBIA Marketing Committee's goals of focusing on Joy in the face of current complex street disorder issues. Using art, we created special moments where people stop to enjoy a short poem, often relating to the business within. It gives our community a 'stop and smell the roses' moment as Spring is emerging and more people are getting out on foot. This also coincides with our school district's Spring Break, when families are looking for free things to do, and when we have more visitors in our community. Stopping to read a poem gives people more time to appreciate merchant's window displays and may also intice them to step inside.

The Poetry Walk is a unique event that is not done in other communities. It is a DCBIA iniative that invited collaboration between local poets, an artist, and DCBIA merchants. Poems are written especially for the event and an artist paints the words on a shop's window using weatherproof paint. Many businesses left their poems up long after the installation officially ended!

The month long installation culminated in a live poetry reading public event at the Comox Valley Art Gallery (CVAG is also a DCBIA member), with all the poets reading from their body of work.

Collaborators:
DCBIA staff and Marketing Committee
DCBIA merchants offer their front windows to be handpainted painted with a poem and contribute $100 sponsorship
Artful:The Poets group of artists (paid $50 each honorarium)
Carys Owen- facilitator between poets and DCBIA
Artist Kelly Everill (paid $50/poem)
CVAG hosted the live reading event

Top Three Measurable Outcomes (maximum 200 words each):

Remember to include Key Performance Indicators and how they were met.

Goal #1: to position Downtown Courtenay as a walkable cultural destination with a barrier-free art installation
Goal #2: to bring JOY to the streets of Downtown in the face of growing complex street disorder
Goal #3: to strengthen the link between art and business

KPI#1:
-Barrier-free event. The event was free to attend and allowed folks to participate at any time of day or night, increasing visibility around the clock for participating merchants storefront displays. You didn't need a car to experience the event, in fact it's best to walk the whole Downtown to do so.
-Downtown as a cultural destination. We saw a couple spin-off art pieces happen that were inspired by the Poetry Walk. The event drew the attention of a local videographer who offered to film poets reading their poems onsite. A local radio DJ also had a creative spin on the event as they were inspired to put a poem to music in a rock song, which was performed live on radio. They were invited to perform it at the poetry reading event.

KPI#2: This is more subjective. The marketing committee debated addressing street disorder publicly but instead decided to focus more on joy, bringing intentional marketing projects to Downtown that spread joy. We saw people enjoying a poem as they walked by and whole grooups of families planning special adventures Downtown to walk the whole route. Instead of people staying away from Downtown because of street disorder, they were stopping to smile at a poem on their way past or planning special outings here.

KPI#3: Link between art and business. Poets were assigned or chose a specific business to write a poem for. Foundation Hair Academy's poem was called "Jenna's Hair". La Cache April Cornell's poem was called "The Perfect Dress", Wildflower Mercantile featured the poem "Wildflowers". Merchants were delighted to work with both the artist who handpainted the poems (an interesting sight as they made their way from store to store) and the poets. By collaborating with Comox Vallley Art Gallery to host the live public poetry reading, we meshed the worlds of art and business. 2023 was the inagural event and we had 11 merchants sign up to sponsor a poem and participate. This year in 2024, the second annual event has more than tripled in size with 32 poems throughout Downtown and an official professionally printed map card!

Project Budget

	Category	Dollars
REVENUES:	11 merchant sponsors	$1100
	TOTAL REVENUES	$1100
EXPENSES:	10 poet honorariums	$550
	10 poems handpainted	$550
	TOTAL EXPENSES	$1100
	PROFIT/LOSS	0

Budget Notes (Maximum 100 words):

As the DCBIA has a total annual operating budget of $60,000, the marketing committee did not finance this campaign. Instead it planned for sponsorship to pay all expenses. Merchants who wanted a poem paid $100 each that was split between the artist and poet.
Free:
-press coverage
-poetry reading venue and hospitality

(I am uploading marketing and project materials along with the application email)

Along with your application, you can upload any marketing or other project materials to a maximum of 10 MBs. Formats can include Word, Excel, PDF. JPG and PNG.