



2026 FRESH WAVES ARTIST APPLICATION

Fresh Waves is an arts initiative facilitated by the Alpena Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to bring unique public artwork to Downtown Alpena, Michigan. Fresh Waves is a celebration of artistic freedom. There is no theme for Fresh Waves; instead, we want to celebrate art for art's sake.

We are looking for artists to contribute the following:

- Large scale murals painted on full walls (estimated \$7,500 stipend)
- Pieces of smaller painted spot art (up to \$2,000 stipend)

Please note that final stipend will be based on size of wall selected for each mural; above estimates are given to give artist a rough idea of our project budget but are subject to change based on interest and size of walls submitted by downtown property owners.

Our DDA Marketing & Promotions Committee will review all artist and property applications and determine the best fit for our project in 2026. Compensation will be provided to selected artists for time, supplies, and services rendered.

Artists will be notified by April 1, 2026 of their selection to participate in our 2026 project.

Selected artists must complete their murals by September 30, 2026.

To be considered as a 2026 artist, please submit the following by **March 15, 2026, at midnight:**

- The attached application form
- Your resume and/or examples of your previous work (link to online portfolio or social media accounts is sufficient)
- One reference from a past commission
- Up to three concepts of a mural you would like to be considered
 - This could be a written description, sketch of a concept, or a mock-up of what you would paint with examples of your past work.
 - Please note that if you are a selected artist, you will need to submit a mock-up that will be approved by the property owner and DDA committee before painting commences.
 - All submissions must remain free of explicit language, nudity, depictions of violence, and any other controversial content.

Applications must be turned into the DDA by **March 15, 2026 at midnight** and can be emailed to downtownalpenami@gmail.com or mailed to Alpena DDA, 124 E. Chisholm St., Alpena, MI 49707.

For more information, please contact DDA Executive Director at Anne Gentry at anneg@alpena.mi.us or call 989-356-6422.



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About Downtown Alpena

Historic Downtown Alpena is the economic and cultural hub of Northeast Michigan and the heart of the City of Alpena. Located on the shores of the Thunder Bay River and Lake Huron, Downtown Alpena has been the economic hub of the area since the 1850's as a major lumber port. Walk through downtown and you'll discover a variety of architectural styles from Italianate to brutalist that tell our community's story from our lumber era peak in the 1880's to the industrialization of the 1960's to the revitalization we have seen in the 2000's.

Now Downtown Alpena is home to a diverse and vibrant set of over 200 businesses, including art galleries, two live theaters, a cinema, a winery, brewery, and cidery, a nationally designated Marine Sanctuary, and a variety of offices, restaurants, bars, non-profits and shops. Alpena is the third largest city in Northern Michigan and our downtown is proud to be the commercial and cultural heart of our community. Learn more about us at www.downtownalpenami.com or visiting Downtown Alpena on social media.

About Fresh Waves

Fresh Waves is an arts initiative facilitated by the Alpena Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The project was launched in 2019 with mural artist Aaron Golbeck, an Alpena native who currently works in Colorado as a professional artist. Golbeck came up with the idea to bring fresh mural art to the Alpena community and create something fresh that people can enjoy and get behind. He connected with the Alpena DDA to bring the Fresh Waves project to life, which annually adds vibrant pieces of public art to the Downtown Alpena landscape. He and Denver-based artist Chad Bolsinger painted the first mural as part of Fresh Waves in July 2019 at Family Enterprise Embroidery, located at 211 S. Second Ave, with the support of owners Cristi and Scotty Johnson.

In November 2021, Fresh Waves was awarded a "Best Placemaking Project" through the Michigan Downtown Association for the project's impact on our downtown and community. In 2023 and for 2024, the DDA has received additional funding support from the Sunset Project and the Michigan Arts & Culture Council to expand the project. 2023 was our largest year yet, commissioning 4 large murals and 2 smaller pieces in the alleyway downtown between 2nd and 3rd Avenue.

Since 2019, 30 pieces of public art have been painted through the Fresh Waves project by artists from all around the country. Each year, the DDA allows artists and downtown property owners to apply to participate in the program. Now, our murals have become a source of community pride and a staple of our small-town identity.

There is no theme for Fresh Waves, instead we want to celebrate art for art's sake and allow the artwork to shine through without boxing it in. We are looking for artwork that stands out and tells a new story, with *fresh* perspective.



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Name (first & last): _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Where are you based? _____

Mailing Address: _____

Link to online portfolio or social media accounts (for past examples of work):

Do you have experience with mural painting? Yes No

- *If yes*, you must provide examples of your past work with the submission of your application and at least one reference from a past commission.
- *If no*, would you be interested in working with a professional muralist who will help you to execute your vision for the mural? (Please note, you must still have experience as an artist.)
Yes No

What is your preferred painting medium? _____

Are you interested in being considered for: Large scale mural Smaller piece of artwork

Your final application must include:

- This form
- Examples of your previous work (link to your online portfolio or social media is sufficient if listed above)
- Any sketches or concepts for a possible mural (optional)
- One reference from a past commission:

Name & Title: _____

Contact Info (phone or email): _____



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Artist Statement: Describe yourself as an artist and explain why you are interested in being involved with Fresh Waves in Downtown Alpena.

Artist Concept: If selected to paint a mural in Downtown Alpena, what would you imagine creating? Tell us about any themes, ideas, or imagery you're drawn to, as well as the artistic style you would use. Your response will help us pair artists with the best possible locations.



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I hereby agree to abide by contest rules and regulations as stated. I agree that I shall hold the City of Alpena, the Alpena Downtown Development Authority and its elected and appointed officials and employees harmless from any and all claims, suits, damages, or loss of use resulting from an act or omission to act by the City of Alpena, the Alpena Downtown Development Authority, and its officers, employees or agents arising out of, or in the course of, my participation in Fresh Waves: The Downtown Alpena Mural Project.

Signature: _____ Date: _____