

# Proposals for Public Life!

Record the impact of your public space project: An open call for nonprofit and community organizations

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Gehl Institute is seeking to partner with community groups or practitioners to evaluate the impact of your project in public space. We'll train you to use our new research tools on public space and public life. After conducting before and after studies, you'll provide us with feedback on how well they worked for your public space project.

4/7 Open Call Released

4/15 Question period ends

4/20 Question answers posted

5/1 Open Call closes

## How it works

Gehl Institute will provide guidance for the evaluation of projects before, during, and after their implementation. Specifically, selected organizations will be trained to use Gehl Institute's simple research tools to measure the impact of their projects. We are interested in helping community organizations to create stories using the data they've collected, as well as receiving feedback from participants on the efficacy of the tools, so as to fine-tune them.

5/8 Interviews with Institute begin

5/22 Winners announced

Selected organizations will learn from the larger cohort of fellow selected organizations, and will be trained by Gehl Institute on experimental tools for evaluating public life and the social impact of public space improvements. By partnering with us to test out our tools, you'll also develop a data-driven presentation deck for future fundraising and coalition building.

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Gehl Institute  
137 2nd Avenue  
New York NY 10003  
USA

[www.gehlinstitute.org](http://www.gehlinstitute.org)  
Tel: 917.355.0406  
EIN: 47-3249218

Page  
2



## Proposals for Public Life!

**Record the impact of your public space project:  
An open call by Gehl Institute for nonprofit and  
community organizations**

### **Public space matters.**

Everyone deserves access to inclusive public spaces, whether to spend time with friends, participate in civic actions, or sit alone. Public space is the fabric through which many of us live our daily lives, where strangers can coexist and community bonds can be strengthened.

At Gehl Institute, we work to make public life—those everyday, communal moments in public space—a priority for design, governance, and policy. We are interested in how streets, parks, plazas, empty lots, and other city spaces can be made more welcoming, accessible, and enjoyable for more people.

### **Telling good stories about the role of public spaces in our communities matters, too.**

It's not always easy to demonstrate the impact that quality public spaces have on our everyday lives. But in order to get community support and city funds for the improvement of public spaces, it's worth knowing how to make compelling, evidence-based cases about your work. For example, the addition of a few benches could dramatically increase the time that older adults spend in your neighborhood park, and recording this data allows you to make a persuasive argument to receive funding for more benches.

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Page  
3

Gehl Institute develops research tools to help you tell these stories. Over the past year, we have created new tools that we hope will be used by more people to measure and better understand the benefits their public spaces bring to their communities. By partnering with cities, academic institutions, community groups, and others, we can test and refine our methods.

## Do you have an idea for a public space improvement in your community?

If the answer is yes, then we want to work with you! Gehl Institute is seeking to partner with community groups or practitioners to evaluate the impact of your project in public space. Together with Gehl (the design and planning firm), we'll train you to use our new research tools. After conducting before and after studies, you'll provide us with feedback on how well they worked for your public space project.

## Project phases

Gehl Institute will provide guidance for the evaluation of projects before, during, and after their implementation. Specifically, selected organizations will be trained to use Gehl Institute's simple research tools to measure the impact of their projects. We are interested in helping community organizations to create stories using the data they've collected, as well as receiving feedback from participants on the efficacy of the tools, so as to fine-tune them.

Gehl Institute's support will be carried out in four phases:

- 1 Gehl Institute will offer consultation to selected organizations via conference calls, and host a webinar to describe the value of public life and importance of storytelling with public life data, as well as assist in the development of research questions.  
**Dates: May 22–June 20**
- 2 Selected organizations will collect baseline evaluations of their project sites using the research tools. Next, organizations will implement their projects and conduct follow-up evaluations to measure their impact. Gehl Institute may provide on-site assistance, to be decided on a case-by-case basis.  
**Dates: June 20–August 20**
- 3 Gehl Institute will help selected organizations craft a compelling story with data to describe the impact of their work. Selected organizations will provide feedback on experimental tools.  
**Dates: August 20–September 20**

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Page  
4

## Benefits of Applying

Selected organizations will learn from the larger cohort of fellow selected organizations, and will be trained by Gehl Institute on experimental tools for evaluating public life and the social impact of public space improvements. By partnering with us to test out our tools, you'll also develop a data-driven presentation deck for future fundraising and coalition building.

Members of selected organizations will also be able to attend Gehl Institute's Act Urban conference (working title) in Philadelphia during October 2017, which will feature their projects.

## How much is available?

Selected organizations will receive about \$10,000, depending on the project type, to support their staff time for the research side of their project. In addition, selected organizations will receive technical assistance from Gehl Institute. Applicants that can provide matching funds will receive extra consideration.

## How to apply

Applications should be submitted via email to [admin@gehl institute.org](mailto:admin@gehl institute.org) by May 1, 2017, and should include the following components:

- **Letter of interest, no longer than 3 pages**
  - Proposed title for the project
  - Statement of purpose and goals of project
  - Neighborhood context for the project
  - Target audience that will benefit from your project
  - Preliminary research question for using Gehl Institute research tools
  - Summary scope of work explaining main activities
  - Amount requested for funding of evaluation and training program participation
- **Summary timeline of activities and milestones**
- **A summary of project budget and evaluation budget with provision of matching funds and other resources**
- **W-9 form with EIN**
- **Program website (optional)**

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Page  
5

## Questions?

Please submit questions on this Call for Proposals by April 15. All questions and question answers will be posted to [www.gehl.institute.org/open-call-answers](http://www.gehl.institute.org/open-call-answers) on April 20. To indicate your interest in applying for this grant and to be added to the email list please email [admin@gehl.institute.org](mailto:admin@gehl.institute.org)

## Selection Criteria

We want to collaborate on projects that serve local community needs and a long-term purpose. Your proposal should be aligned with our broader goals for the Open Call: creating a positive impact in public space, spreading the use of our research tools, testing and fine-tuning the tools through use, and demonstrating the importance of public life-oriented projects. Applicants must be organized, pragmatic, and passionate about making change in their communities. You must also have the capacity to execute the proposed project with minimal guidance from Gehl Institute.

## What kinds of projects will be funded?

We are interested in applying our research tools to public spaces of any kind, from temporary street installations and openings, to community gardens, plazas, and new parks programming. Primarily, these projects must be sensitive to local needs, and teams should secure necessary permissions in advance of applying. Proposed projects can be temporary, such as an event, but must serve a long-term purpose (for example, as a step in a long-term development process or to demonstrate the demand for similar projects across the city). They can also be design projects that improve comfort and accessibility, provide educational benefits, enhance climate resiliency, or offer opportunities for physical activity. Ideally, projects will be welcoming to people of many backgrounds and identities, and/or provide a resource in neighborhoods lacking quality spaces for public life to thrive. All projects must be inclusive and accessible.

## Who should apply?

We're encouraging project proposals from U.S.-based community groups, design and planning students and practitioners, non-profits, and other organizations with an interest in improving public space for community benefit. Nonprofit 501(c)(3) designation is required, or a fiscal sponsor who can serve in that role. This project is funded by the Knight Foundation, and so preference will be given to teams in Knight Foundation cities.

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Throughout the process, Gehl Institute will provide guidance on how to use its research methods and can be contacted by email or phone. However, organizations should only apply if they are able to independently carry out their proposed projects.

## Application timeline

4/7	Open Call Released
4/15	Question period ends
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5/8	Interviews with Institute begin
5/22	Winners announced