Is Your City the Next “Vanguard” City?

Next City is Searching for Host Cities for the 2016 and 2017 Vanguard Conferences.

Next City Vanguard Conference
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Issued: June 29, 2015
Deadline: August 17, 2015
Please send proposals via email by 5pm Monday, August 17, 2015 to Sara Schuenemann, Events & Development Manager – sara@nextcity.org

1. Overview
Next City is looking to identify a host city for its 2016 & 2017 Vanguard conferences to take place in the spring of 2016 & 2017. Vanguard is an annual leadership gathering of young urban leaders working to improve cities. This is a unique opportunity for a city to show off its latest urban development projects to a leading media organization, share innovations with the country’s smartest emerging leaders and get ideas from bright young thinkers.

Past conference participants include 40 leaders under 40 (www.nextcity.org/vanguard/members) selected by a competitive application process representing a diverse array of professions, backgrounds and regions. In the 2016 & 2017 Vanguard, Next City will be looking for innovative partners who can help the organization take the conference to the next level. We are actively considering ideas for unique programmatic changes and/or partnerships and sponsorships that can expand the impact of the conference and help make this event more sustainable as an earned revenue opportunity for Next City, which will ensure that the organization can continue to offer this unique experience. 94% of this year’s conference attendees reported an improved view of the host city, leading to 40 new urban ambassadors for the region.

2. About Next City
Next City is a nonprofit organization with a mission to inspire social, economic and environmental change in cities by creating media and events around the world. Next City’s daily online coverage of public policy and current affairs, focused on economic development, sustainability, infrastructure and civic tech draws 500,000 monthly readers. These readers tend to be urban professionals. Next City’s largest readership bases are in the following cities, listed in descending order: New York, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, London, Toronto, Seattle and Boston. In addition to our online journalism, Next City offers professional development opportunities and produces
events and conferences.

3. About Vanguard
Vanguard is an annual experiential urban leadership gathering of the best and brightest young urban leaders working to improve cities across sectors, including urban planning, community development, entrepreneurship, government, transportation, sustainability, design, art and media. Each year, Next City announces an open call for Vanguard participants, and selects 40 whose experience in the field and ambition for the future show great promise. In prior years we have received upwards of 300 applications. These Vanguards, joined by Vanguard alumni, host city committee members and Next City staff, gather for a three-day series of presentations, workshops, neighborhood tours and more to collectively learn and think about how to tackle challenges faced by our cities. In 2015, the Vanguard conference included the Big Idea Challenge, where the winning teams’ idea is currently being developed and implemented in Reno by the local Vanguards and members of the host committee.

Vanguard is a powerful opportunity for emerging and mid-career leaders who may be working in fields that don’t typically offer opportunities for professional development and knowledge sharing across different disciplines and sectors. Next City is committed to ensuring that all invited Vanguards can participate, and each year the organization has covered the majority of conference costs for participants, including conference attendance, most meals and local travel. Vanguards are expected to pay for travel to and from the conference. Past Vanguard conferences have been held in Reno (2015), Chattanooga (2014), Cleveland (2013), St. Louis (2012), Philadelphia (2010) and Washington DC (2009).

4. Scope of Services
Lead Sponsor(s): In selecting a city to host Vanguard, Next City seeks one or more Lead Sponsors who can provide full financial support and collaborate with Next City to shape the conference. The Lead Sponsor will provide a direct contact for Next City to speak with on a bi-monthly basis throughout the planning of the conference. Lead sponsors will work with Next City to develop shared goals and issue areas/themes for the conference. In the past, sponsors have included a chamber of commerce, local foundation, economic development corporation, marketing and tourism bureau or a combination of the above. Next City is also open to and interested in working with corporations and universities. Lead sponsors collaborate with Next City to select and invite local urban leaders representing diverse sectors and interests to serve on a conference host committee.

Host Committee
Members of the host committee, including representatives of sponsoring organizations, representatives of local government, and other stakeholders will work with Next City staff to chart out the conference's programming, logistics, and theme. Critically, the committee curates local tours that showcase exciting initiatives and innovative projects, as well as areas of the city that demonstrate its challenges. The host committee will participate in portions of the conference, engage and network with Vanguards at various receptions, and play a strategic role in executing the Big Idea Challenge. Next City is keenly interested in engaging government officials and requests that the mayor or other chief executive officer of the host city be integrally involved.

Activities may include:
• Participate in regular conference calls with Next City staff;
• Recommend and connect Next City staff with local vendors and locations;
• Design and facilitate local tours;
• Serve as speakers, moderators and/or provide on-site support for events, where necessary;
• Promote attendance at any Vanguard events open to the public and coordinate local PR efforts;
• Promote conference to local government and involve local mayor to participate in various events, including welcoming Vanguards and attending the Big Idea Challenge.
Budget
The cost of organizing and holding the conference depends on the location, lodging options and the finalized agenda and activities. Next City and the Lead Sponsor(s) will work together to raise additional grants and corporate sponsorships to enhance the overall content. Some in-kind contributions, such as free event space, can offset hard costs. A key aspect of the Vanguard conference is that conference attendees’ costs are kept to a minimum. To ensure the sustainability of this program, and to grow it in future years, Next City will work with partners to develop a budget that allows the conference to earn money that can be channeled back into the organization to build our capacity for future Vanguard conferences and other important programs. Candidates will be able to provide a minimum of $25,000 in support for the conference and prospects for additional sponsorship opportunities.

Next City will be responsible for the following activities:
• Next City staff will coordinate all programming and logistics in advance and during the three-day conference in your city, which will be open to selected Vanguard applicants, alumni, host committee members and other relevant community partners;
• Next City will cover the host city with two to four blog posts in the week leading up to, during or after the conference;
• Next City and 40+ young leaders from around the country will provide additional coverage of your city on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram;
• The convention bureau or other local promotional partner will receive free ad space on nextcity.org for 3 months;
• See www.nextcity.org/vanguard for additional benefits of hosting the conference.

5. Proposal Requirements
To apply, please submit a comprehensive proposal with the following information.

1. Letter of Interest (3-page max)
The letter should include the following information:
• Brief description of why you think your city is ripe for this opportunity;
• Brief description of the Lead Sponsor(s) and your vision for the Vanguard conference in your city;
• How your organization’s activities align with the conference, and your anticipated outcomes;
• Suggested opportunities and challenges that would serve as the basis for the content development of the conference;
• One or more big ideas for how to make the 2016 or 2017 conference bigger, better or more impactful;
• Your funding commitment and strategy, including detail on secured and/or pledged funds, in addition to any other ideas for support;
• An overview of the strengths and resources of your organization(s) and host committee, specifically your experience with tours, event planning,
hosting conferences, multi-stakeholder partnerships, or other relevant activities.
- Anticipated commitment of the mayor and other elected officials from the city and region.

2. Proposed Host Committee (1 page max)
Please include the organization name and a brief description of each organization. Please include proposed host member names and titles if possible.
Host committees should be representative of the diverse communities in your city.

3. Supporting Material
In addition, please send us material on your city, including basic information and demographics, recent innovations, case studies, leadership profiles or challenges. These can be in any format, including written information, videos, or links.

Please submit the following items by August 17th, 2015 to Sara Schuenemann via email (sara@nextcity.org).

6. Evaluation Criteria
Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Financial Feasibility: The applicant has demonstrated financial commitment and proposed fundraising strategy;
2. Innovation and Synergy: The host city has a dynamic civic ecosystem with leaders who are enthusiastic and flexible. There are clear, shared goals and interests and innovative ideas that will expand or enhance the existing platform;
3. Experience: Lead sponsors and host committee are committed to improving their city and have experience with the content areas, multi-faceted partnerships, developing conferences and/or similar events.

Questions? Call or email
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For more information visit www.nextcity.org or www.nextcity.org/vanguard

More information on the Vanguard 2015 Reno Conference

Sampling of Next City coverage
Hey Urban Innovators, Meet Us in Reno - Next City - Dec. 15, 2014
www.nextcity.org/daily/entry/next-city-vanguard-2015-reno-apply-urban-innovators

Homeless Shelter Proves to Be Important Ingredient in Reno’s Revitalization Success - Next City - March 9, 2015
www.nextcity.org/daily/entry/homeless-shelter-revitalization-reno

If You Build Startup Row in the Desert, Will They Come? - Next City - May 4, 2015
www.nextcity.org/features/view/reno-tech-industry-start-up-row-jobs-casinos

2015 Vanguards Get Creative Amid Reno’s Drive to Succeed - Next City - May 12, 2015
www.nextcity.org/daily/entry/next-city-2015-vanguard-reno-photos
In Reno, Public Art Goes Along With Complete Streets Makeover
Sampling of other coverage
Next City to host Vanguard Conference in Reno - RGJ - Dec. 17, 2015

How can downtown Reno be improved? 60 urban leaders tackle challenge - RGJ - April 27, 2015

Why is city event only for under-40s? Letter - RGJ - April 27, 2015

'Next City' impressed with surge in Reno's cultural, entrepreneurial activity - News 4 - May 5, 2015

'Next City' brings Vanguard event to Reno - News 4 - May 6, 2015
www.mynews4.com/news/story/Next-City-brings-Vanguard-event-to-Reno/SswjZRVX0acHclnX9IS5A.cspx


Live coverage: Urbanists tackle Reno challenges - RGJ - May 7, 2015

How to make Reno better on the cheap - RGJ - May 8, 2015
www.rgj.com/story/news/2015/05/07/reno-can-learn-tactical-urbanism/70969604/

University Galleries Director selected to prestigious class of Vanguards - University of Reno - May 11, 2015