

Cities with Ambassador Programs

Akron, OH	Hollywood, FL	Pittsburgh, PA
Albuquerque, NM	Honolulu, HI	Portland, OR
Arlington, VA	Jackson, MS	Providence, RI
Baltimore, MD	Jacksonville, FL	Raleigh, NC
Berkeley, CA	Lancaster, PA	San Antonio, TX
Boston, MA	Long Beach, CA	San Diego, CA
Bridgeport, CT	Los Angeles, CA	San Francisco, CA
Brooklyn, NY	Louisville, KY	San Jose, CA
Cincinnati, OH	Miami, FL	Santa Monica, CA
Cleveland, OH	Minneapolis, MN	Seattle, WA
Columbia, SC	Mobile, AL	South Bend, IN
Columbus, OH	Nashville, TN	Tempe, AZ
Dayton, OH	New Orleans, LA	Toledo, OH
Denver, CO	New Haven, CT	Tucson, AZ
Des Moines, IA	New York, NY	Vancouver, BC
Duluth, MN	Newark, NJ	Ventura, CA
Easton, PA	Oakland, CA	Washington, DC
Glendale, CA	Oxnard, CA	West Hollywood, CA
Grand Rapids, MI (DDA)	Pasadena, CA	Wilkes-Barre, PA
Hartford, CT	Philadelphia, PA	Yakima, WA

Comparables

- There are no exact comparables to Ann Arbor regarding city size, college town but not also a state capital, the kind of downtown organization that oversees the Ambassador program, etc.
- Nearly every city with one or more Ambassador programs are much larger than Ann Arbor. Some of the smaller cities include Easton PA (pop. 27,000), Ventura CA (pop. 108,000, part of larger L.A. area), and South Bend IN (pop 100,800, U of Notre Dame is nearby), Hartford CT (pop. 125,000, State Capital), Hollywood FL (pop 145,000) and Dayton OH (pop 140,000).
- Many of the larger cities have more than one Ambassador program.
- The only MI downtown that we've found so far with Ambassadors is Grand Rapids, and this program is sponsored by their DDA and paid for using parking revenues. They began their program in late summer 2013.

Ambassador services

- The term “Ambassadors” means different things in each city. However, in all instances they are intended to provide services distinct from, but perhaps complimentary to, the services provided by their City.
- Based in the BID “clean and safe” mantra, some Ambassador programs include a strong focus on keeping sidewalks clean, flower planters watered, and handbills removed. These Ambassadors work throughout a designated area using small vehicles that have brooms, hoses for watering, and paint to cover graffiti.
- Some Ambassador programs include a strong focus on customer relations, and these Ambassadors are warm friendly people whose purpose is to engage with visitors to provide advice about shopping, restaurants, events, and attractions, and assist as needed, including giving directions, providing information about parking/transit.
- Some Ambassador programs include a focus aimed at helping to deter crime by serving as “eyes & ears” to notify police if things look amiss. This kind of focus on safety is particularly common with Ambassador programs in the larger cities. In addition to assisting the police, these Ambassador programs also assist the local human service providers by notifying them if individuals appear to be in need.
- There is no universal approach to using Ambassadors, no “one size fits all”. Each community selects a set of services and then places more or less emphasis on certain services their Ambassadors are to perform.
- In some instances the downtown organization employs Ambassadors as staff members. In other instances a professional company is selected, and this company then hires, trains, uniforms, and manages Ambassadors on behalf of the downtown organization.
- Most downtown organizations generate metrics as a result of their Ambassador programs. E.g. number of planters watered weekly, number of hours worked, etc.

Ambassador costs

- Each downtown organization determines the amount of staffing they required, including whether their Ambassadors are available only during special events, daytime vs. nighttime, the kinds of services they are providing, all corners of the downtown or in the core area only. This affects the annual cost for the program.
- The size of the area to be served will affect the cost.