

Madison Heights Downtown Development Authority Sign Grant Program Guidelines

Program Goal & Description: The City of Madison Heights Downtown Development Authority Sign Grant Program is intended to encourage a high standard of business signage to complement the architectural character of the DDA area. This program is intended to encourage private investment, reduce blight, provide incentives to current businesses and property owners, and improve the overall image of the DDA District. Subject to funding availability, the DDA may approve and provide reimbursement of fifty percent (50%) of the cost to design, construct and install a sign, and one hundred percent (100%) of the cost to remove a non-conforming or dilapidated sign, up to a maximum grant of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00).

Who is Eligible? Property owners and/or businesses meeting all the following requirements are eligible to apply for the DDA Sign Grant:

- **Business must be in the DDA area and in continuous operation for one (1) year.** For purposes of the Sign Grant Program, a business is considered an existing business if it has been in continuous operation from a building located within the DDA District for at least one (1) year. Applicants in operation less than one year may apply, and be awarded, on a case-by-case basis, but may not receive reimbursement until reaching one year of continuous operation.
- **Current taxes & operating in compliance with local ordinances.** Must be current with all property taxes, utility payments, have a valid Certificate of Occupancy and a current business license through Madison Heights Clerks Office.
- **Project has not already started or pulled permits.** Any projects that have begun prior to DDA board approval are ineligible.
- **No more than two grants in any ten (10) year period.** A business may not receive more than two grants in any ten (10) year period (one for a ground sign and one for a wall sign). In the case of a shopping center, one (1) ground sign for the center shall be eligible, along with one (1) wall sign for each eligible individual business, within the same ten (10) year limitation.

Design Guidelines: All sign designs, construction, installation, and demolition must conform to all relevant local ordinances of the City of Madison Heights.

Application Submission Deadline: Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis. However, application must be submitted at least two (2) weeks prior to any Regular DDA meeting to be considered. Only complete applications will be accepted.

Approval Criteria: Applications will be considered on a first come first served basis and approval of applications shall be based on the availability of funds. The DDA board will evaluate applications based on the scope of project and give the highest priority given to projects that remove and replace blight and existing nonconforming items. Priority will also be given to businesses that have not already received a sign grant from the DDA. The DDA board will also

take into consideration the visual impact the project has on the district. The DDA Board uses discretion in awarding these grants and reserved the right not to approve any application for any reason.

How to Apply & Approval Process: Contact the Madison Heights DDA by calling the Community Development Department at 248-583-0831, to receive a Sign Grant Application **before** applying for a permit, any work is done, or any structure is demolished or installed. The process for grant consideration is as follows:

1. **Submit your complete application.** After discussing your project with the DDA Director submit a complete sign grant application and include all attachments to Community & Economic Development Dept. located at 300 W. 13 Mile Rd, Madison Heights, MI.
2. **Projects \$1,000 or less may be approved administratively.** The DDA Director may grant approval for grant application requests of \$1,000 or less if they determine there are no issues requiring consideration of the DDA board. All other requests must be reviewed and approved by the DDA board.
3. **Staff Review.** Application is reviewed for completeness and compliance with local ordinances by the DDA Director and Building Official and then referred for recommendation to the DDA's Economic Vitality Committee.
4. **Economic Vitality Recommendation & DDA Board Consideration.** Application is then sent to the Economic Vitality Committee for recommendation. This recommendation and any requested revisions are provided to the applicant and included in the agenda item presented to the full DDA board meeting for consideration.
5. **DDA Board Consideration.** DDA board members will consider a sign grant application at a meeting open to the public and either approve, deny, or send the application back for revisions. Applicants are encouraged to attend this meeting to answer any questions.
6. **Grant Approval & Project Completion Limit.** Approved sign grant funds are available to the applicant for one year after grant approval, however the project must be started within six (6) months after approval is given. If no request for payment has been received following this period, the applicant forfeits any claim to the grant and may not reapply for a period of ten (10) years.
7. **Staff sends out Sign Grant Commitment Letter.** If the project is approved by the DDA board, the applicant will receive a Sign Grant Commitment Letter from the DDA. Upon receiving this letter, the applicant (or their contractor) can pull all necessary permits and begin work.
8. **Project may proceed according to the design and plan approved by the DDA board.** PLEASE NOTE: The DDA must authorize any changes to the approved design in advance, in writing, or the DDA may withdraw its funding commitment.
9. **Awardee notifies staff the project complete & paid for.** Upon completion of the project, notify the DDA that the work has been completed and provide a copy of the paid invoice(s) and canceled check or other form of proof of payment acceptable to the DDA

board. Applicant must also provide the attached Waiver of Lien from the licensed contractors. This proof would serve as your request for payment.

10. **Grant funds disbursed to Awardee.** The DDA will disburse Sign funds directly to the applicant following an inspection to verify that the project is consistent with the approved grant application plans, and verification that the Community Development Department has approved the construction in full compliance with all permits.