

Montgomery Economic Development Corporation
AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: April 19 , 2021	Budgeted Amount: NA
Prepared By: Richard Tramm	Exhibits: Draft Signage Grant Policy

Subject

Consideration of Signage Grant Policy. (Tabled at the March 15, 2021 Meeting.)

Discussion

This item was tabled at the March 15, 2021 MEDC Board Meeting to allow the Board of Directors greater time to review the proposed policy.

Although few grant requests were made in 2020, the MEDC has received several inquiries regarding grant funds in recent months which include two for signage. During my research related to grants for signs and discussions with the City Attorney, I would advise caution related to being liberal in providing grants for signage. One item of note is that providing a grant of this type includes a determination of the MEDC Board that the grant would promote expanded business development. This could be difficult when applied to a sign which might otherwise be considered an ordinary business expense. From my review of this item, I have developed a draft of a policy based on a similar policy used in another EDC and have attempted to draft reasonable guidelines that will help guide the MEDC with respect to approving grants for signs.

Recommendation

Consider and discuss the draft Signage Grant Policy and consider approval or provide direction to the City Administrator related to this item.

Approved By

City Administrator	Richard Tramm <i>RT</i>	Date: April 15, 2021
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**Montgomery Economic Development Corporation
Cost-Sharing Signage Grant Policy
Approved _____**

Background

It is within the scope of an economic development corporation's (EDC) body of work to consider requests for financial assistance from a local business for signage improvements to their building or property if the signage is to promote expanded business development. This in no way obligates the EDC to such a policy.

The Montgomery Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) has determined it necessary to clarify the policy and the procedure for signage grants, which resulted in the following policy.

Policy

The MEDC makes available to businesses within the city limits of Montgomery an opportunity to apply for a signage grant according to criteria established and enforced by its Board of Directors. Highest priority will be given to business signage projects that offer the most improved visual effects for the business community and also serves to promote expanded business development in the City. For the purposes of this grant, signage may be interpreted, at the sole discretion of the MEDC board of directors, to include a building façade that includes appropriate signage on the building exterior.

Funding of this grant program is entirely dependent upon the annual MEDC approved budget and may change from year to year. Currently, the budget for this line item is set at an annual maximum of \$20,000 with an individual limit of up to (but not guaranteed to be equal to) \$5,000.00 per approved application and completed project. The actual amount to be approved for any specific signage grant will be determined by the Board of Directors at the time of approval.

Grants will be limited to one per business owner or entity no more frequently than every 5 years.

The MEDC Board of Directors has sole discretion to determine which projects are approved. MEDC will not consider remodeling costs or expenses not associated with signage projects.

Applications for a signage grant must be made on the MEDC's designated Grant Application form and be received by the City of Montgomery City Administrator no later than 14 days prior to the meeting at which it would first appear on the MEDC Meeting Agenda. All appropriate City of Montgomery Ordinances must be complied with and all appropriate City Permits approved for the signage prior to the MEDC Board of Directors considering this grant application. MEDC will not consider applications for matching grant funding after the project has been started or completed.

Upon completion of the project, if the Board finds the work produced to be less than the project originally indicated or of lesser quality than presented at the in-person presentation, the Board reserves the right to withdraw or adjust its offer to provide the grant match at its sole discretion with no further consideration.

The MEDC will not reimburse taxes due on any signage construction. Taxes due for signage construction and/or modifications will be the sole responsibility of the applicant/business owner.

The MEDC prohibits discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, disability, familial status, national origin or any other category protected by law.

Application Process

Eligibility

Businesses located within the city limits of Montgomery are eligible for consideration of the matching grant. All signage for which grants are being requested must have all necessary City of Montgomery permits and other approvals in place prior to the application being considered by the MEDC board of directors. Signage which may be considered under this grant should be clearly visible in a way that it helps identify the business from the adjoining roads and/or parking areas so that it could assist in drawing the attention of customers to the site.

Timeline

A business wishing to apply for a signage matching grant may obtain the application from the MEDC website or directly from the MEDC at City Hall located at 101 Old Plantersville Road, Montgomery, Texas 77316.

The general consideration timeline for a signage grant is as follows:

1. Application form received by MEDC and be deemed complete no later than 14 days prior to MEDC Meeting.
2. Application form appears on agenda and is read for first time at MEDC Meeting and, if it willing to consider the item for future action, MEDC calls for a Public Hearing for next meeting (usually the following month but must be at least 7 days later by law).
3. Convene and hold Public Hearing on the item.
4. Consider the item at a second public meeting of the MEDC (which may, at the discretion of the MEDC, be the same date of the Public Hearing). The applicant requesting must be in attendance for this meeting to personally present the grant application to the Board of Directors. (The MEDC may allow applicants to appear via alternative means if MEDC Meetings are being held via a virtual format and consider that to be an "in-person" appearance.)
5. If approved and constructed, Applicant will provide required documentation to the MEDC for review to insure conformance to all the MEDC requirements.
6. The Board will consider approval to make the matching payment to the Applicant after all requirements are deemed to have been successfully completed and verified.

It is the applicant's sole responsibility to ensure timely delivery of the completed application to the MEDC. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant. The MEDC Administrator or the MEDC Board reserves the right to request additional information regarding the project at any time prior to the decision to consider funding the matching grant.

Amendments or changes to the original plans or scope of work submitted to the MEDC Board after a Board decision has been made may result in 1) revocation or cancellation of the previous Board decision, or 2) the need to submit a new application, or 3) no further action if amendment(s) or change(s) are found to be negligible by the Board. The action to be taken is determined by the majority vote of the MEDC Board.

Required Documentation

The following must be included with the completed application:

Photo(s) or drawing(s) of current project

Bid/Estimate from vendor describing estimated cost of project (estimate must have name and address of vendor)

The Following must be submitted at the conclusion of the project:

Photo(s) of the actual finished project

Paid invoices (with payment confirmation) specific to the approved project (invoices must have name and address of vendor).

MEDC Payment will be to the applicant and not to the company constructing the sign.

Board Determination

After the in-person presentation to the MEDC Board, the Board will determine what action to take. The MEDC Administrator will notify the applicant within 48 hours of the Board's determination.

The amount the Board agrees to match is subject to submission and receipt of all paid invoices for the work outlined in the application and/or any amendments or changes to the application. Payment is ultimately granted if the Board approves of the final product. If, in the Board's determination, the work product is less than was expected, the Board may withdraw its offer of the grant match at its sole discretion.

Projects approved by the MEDC Board may be matched by a to-be-determined percentage not to exceed a 50% match by MEDC for each dollar the applicant spends on the signage project with a maximum match of (but not guaranteed) up to \$5000 per project. This does not imply a guaranteed percentage or amount for any project.

Upon receipt of the paid invoices, and final approval by the MEDC Board, the MEDC Administrator will issue the grant matching payment to the applicant within 10 working days.

Montgomery Economic Development Corporation Application for Signage Match Grant
Approved _____

A completed Grant Application and all required attachments or documentation must be submitted to the MEDC office after all City permits and approvals have been granted and before signage work begins. The MEDC Board reserves the right to request additional information for consideration of this application.

I have read and understand the MEDC Policy on Cost-Sharing Signage Grants. _____
(Initials)

Date of Application _____ Anticipated Project Start Date _____

Business Name _____

Business Physical Address _____
(Actual address where improvement project will be made)

Years in Business in City of Montgomery _____

Owner(s) Information (please use back of this form if more space is needed)

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Telephone Numbers _____

Email address _____

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Telephone Numbers _____

Email address _____

Written Scope of Work for Grant (what do you want to do, the plan):

I have attached a separate sheet with the Scope of Work described.

I have attached a copy of all necessary permits and other approvals by the City of Montgomery for the signage covered by this request.

Photo(s) and/or drawing(s) of proposed design attached (required).

Written bid/estimate for the signage project to present to MEDC Board (required). Must have name and address of company or person providing estimate(s).

If my project is approved for the grant match, I understand that I am required to provide photos of the finished project to present to the MEDC Board prior to receiving the MEDC grant match for the MEDC to

I also understand that if the MEDC Board has any concerns about the quality of work and the finished product, the Board reserves the right to withdraw the grant matches at its sole discretion.

I have read and understand the MEDC Policy on Cost-Sharing Signage Grants. _____
(Initials)

Applicant Signature _____ Date _____

MEDC Administrator Signature _____ Date _____

**MEDC Check list of Cost Sharing Signage Grant
(for MEDC use below)**

Applicant _____

Date MEDC received application _____

MEDC Board meetings/public hearings scheduled _____

MEDC Board Action and Date _____:

MEDC Grant % or up to amount approved _____

Added Grant Stipulations:

Final Approval by the Board

Date _____

Approved grant match and/or % _____

Applicant Signature _____ **Date** _____

MEDC Executive Director Signature _____ **Date** _____