

WEST COLUMBIA

EST.  1836

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

GUIDELINES, CRITERIA, AND APPLICATION FOR WCEDC BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of this program is to promote the development and expansion of new and existing business enterprises and attract more people to the area, which will generate additional sales activity and to enhance the economic welfare of the citizens of the City, by securing and retaining business enterprises and maintaining a higher level of employment, economic activity, and stability within the City. This program is intended to assist projects that promote retail activities, create an attractive environment, and encourage neighborhood character. Furthermore, the program is intended to assist property owners or tenants with improvements or restorations of the esthetics and appearance. The West Columbia Economic Development Corporation (the “WCEDC”) has budgeted \$25,000 per fiscal year (October 1 to September 30) to fund this grant program. Upon depletion of those funds, the WCEDC will be under no obligation to fund additional grants. The maximum amount of funding available to any one applicant or business establishment shall be \$5,000 per fiscal year. The grant amount shall be equal to 50% of the cost of improvements for any combination of the categories below up to a total of \$5,000.

Section 2. Grant Type

Grants provided are reimbursement grants, such grants being a cash match for funds disbursed by the Applicant. In-kind contributions, or other grant funds, may not be used by an applicant for matching funds. Only Applicant’s cash expenditures may be used as a grant match.

- **FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT:** Improvements to storefronts including, but not limited to cleaning, power washing, painting, reconstruction, and/or remodeling. All improvements must be exterior.
- **SIGN IMPROVEMENT:** New signs and/or renovation or removal of existing signs.
- **PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT:** Items such as, but not limited to landscaping, parking lot resurfacing, striping, driveway improvement, and lighting. All improvements must be exterior.
- **MURAL INCENTIVE:** Murals added to commercial buildings.

Section 3. Eligibility

- A.** Any new or existing for-profit business facility physically located within the West Columbia City Limits. Applicant's tax status will be verified with the State Comptroller's office.
- B.** Business facilities also serving as a residence are not eligible.
- C.** Business facilities and/or properties which have outstanding financial obligations to the City of West Columbia, including but not limited to liens, court fines, delinquent City utility bills, or delinquent taxes are not eligible.
- D.** Business facilities and/or property owners which are involved in any manner of litigation against the City of West Columbia or the WCEDC are not eligible.

Section 4. Application and Approval

Applications are available at city offices at 512 E. Brazos Ave., West Columbia, Texas or online at www.westcolumbiatx.org.

- Applications filed with the Director of EDC on or before the first Monday of each month shall be considered at the next regular WCEDC Board meeting or at such special Board meeting that may be called.
- All WCEDC approved applications will then be forwarded to the West Columbia City Council for final approval.
- An applicant shall be notified in writing within ten (10) days of final approval or disapproval of the application.

Section 5. Guidelines

- (A) Proof of applicant's ownership of the subject facility or facilities, or proof that the owner of such facility has approved the application for such grant funds, and current tax receipt shall be required.
- (B) The owner of a business operated within a leased facility and the owner of such leased facility must apply jointly for the program. Copies of the signed lease agreement, proof of ownership of the leased facility, and current tax receipt shall be required.
- (C) A business may apply for the grant only once per fiscal year. A business that receives grant funding during a fiscal year shall not be prohibited from making subsequent applications for funding in following years.
- (D) The maximum amount of funding available to any one applicant or business establishment shall be a total of \$5,000 per fiscal year.
- (E) Labor provided by the applicant or his/her employees/family may not be included in the cost estimate of the project and is not reimbursable through this program.

- (F) All grants are reimbursement grants and will only be paid after completion of the approved project. Copies of paid receipts for all applicable materials and labor must be submitted to the WCEDC before funds are disbursed. Photographs of the completed work are required.
- (G) The applicant is obligated to make the improvements in accordance with the approved application. Work must be completed within three (3) months of approval.
- (H) The applicant is responsible for obtaining all applicable permits related to the improvement project and must comply with all current city ordinances. Failure to do so will render the applicant ineligible to receive grant funding. Failure to complete all the stated improvements shall render the applicant ineligible to receive grant funding.
- (I) The applicant shall not begin any improvements prior to receiving written approval from the WCEDC. All improvement projects must be completed within three (3) months of the approval date. Failure to complete the improvements within the required time period may render the applicant ineligible to receive grant funding.

Section 6. Funding

- (A) The applicant shall confirm that the project has been completed in accordance with the application. Such notification shall include, but not be limited to, a certificate of completion, documentation of paid receipts for materials and labor, and photos of completion. The WCEDC may request other items reasonably deemed necessary for determining the project's completion. An inspection will be performed within five (5) business days of notification by the City Inspector. If needed, a letter will be issued to the applicant indicating all areas of noncompliance.
- (B) When all areas of the project are in compliance, the City Inspector will approve the Certificate of Completion and submit to the Director of EDC for payment. The Director of EDC will authorize the release of grant funds equal to 50% up to the maximum eligible limit.

Section 7. Default

The applicant shall be considered in default under this agreement for failure to comply with the following provisions.

- (A) The applicant must remain in business for 12 months from the date of Certificate of Completion. If the subject business is closed, sold, transferred, or relocated within a six (6) month period, the applicant shall be required to reimburse the WCEDC for 100% of grant funds received.
- (B) Thereafter, until the 12-month anniversary date of Certificate of Completion, the applicant shall be required to reimburse the WCEDC for 50% of the grant funds received if the subject business is closed, sold, transferred, or relocated.

Reimbursement payments due to default must be paid in full within thirty (30) days after the date of written notification by the WCEDC that the applicant is in default of any of the funding requirements set forth herein. Payment only accepted in the form of a cashier's check or money order, made payable to West Columbia Economic Development Corporation.

The applicant must agree that, in the event of default of its obligations, the WCEDC has the right to reimbursement for all attorney's fees and costs, which may be incurred as a result of any legal action required to seek reimbursement of all grant funding received by applicant.

Section 8. Termination

The grant will automatically terminate if the project is not completed within three (3) months of WCEDC approval of the grant application.

Section 9. Notice

- (A) The WCEDC shall deliver a copy of these guidelines to any applicant for his/her review and the delivery hereof does not constitute an offer of a business improvement grant to the applicant.
- (B) The laws of the State of Texas shall govern the interpretation, validity, performance and enforcement of this business improvement grant program, and venue for any lawsuit or other proceeding involving this program shall be in Brazoria County, Texas. If any provision of this business improvement grant program is held to be invalid or unenforceable, the validity and enforceability of the remaining provisions shall not be affected thereby.

West Columbia Economic Development Corporation

APPLICATION FOR BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Please carefully read the following:

A business may receive assistance during the fiscal year (October 1 to September 30). Funding assistance is approved **prior to construction** and awarded at the discretion of the West Columbia Economic Development Corporation Board. Funding assistance is distributed as reimbursement after the applicant submits paid receipts for the project. Photographs of the completed project are required when receipts are submitted.

Applicant Name: _____

Business Name: _____

Property Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Other: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Please provide one of the following:

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Individual owner | Recorded DBA Certificate |
| 2. Partnership | Partnership Agreement |
| 3. Corporation | Articles of Incorporation |

Date business was established or opened in West Columbia: _____

Brief description of business (attach additional sheet if necessary): _____

Number of employees: _____ Full-Time: _____ Part-Time: _____

Description of proposed project (attach additional sheet if necessary): _____

Estimated date of completion for this project: _____

Estimated Material cost: _____ Labor cost: _____

(Three Estimates/Quotes must be submitted with application.)

The undersigned acknowledges and agrees to abide by and subject to the terms and conditions of the business improvement grant program described herein.

I certify that no improvements, as described in this application, shall begin prior to receiving written approval of grant funding from the WCEDC.

Business Owner's Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Property Owner's Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Applications may be delivered to WCEDC Director of EDC, 512 E. Brazos Ave., West Columbia, Texas or mailed to P.O. Box 487, West Columbia, TX 77486

Checklist:

- _____ Completed application with all required estimates.
- _____ Entity legal documents
- _____ Proof of ownership
- _____ Current paid tax receipts (real & personal property)
- _____ Copy of lease agreement.

West Columbia Economic Development Corporation

Timeline

Application received by WCEDC Director of EDC _____/_____/_____

Submitted to WCEDC meeting on _____/_____/_____

Submitted to West Columbia City Council meeting on _____/_____/_____

Applicant notified of decision to approve/disapprove (10 days) _____/_____/_____

Completion deadline (3 months from approval) _____/_____/_____

Certificate of Completion received by WCEDC _____/_____/_____

Inspection performed on (5 business days) _____/_____/_____

If applicable, letter of non-compliance to applicant _____/_____/_____

Final approved Certificate of Completion received by Register Agent _____/_____/_____

Total receipts submitted for reimbursement Total \$ _____

Less 50% - _____

Amt Eligible \$ _____

Registered Agent Confirmation _____ date _____

Release of grant fund by Director of EDC Pd Amt. \$ _____ Ck # _____ _____/_____/_____

Check payable to: _____

Address: _____

West Columbia Economic Development Corporation-Certification of Completion

Applicant Name: _____

Business Name: _____

AFFIDAVIT

I CERTIFY that all improvements have been satisfactorily completed in accordance to the approved application, that all charges or bills for labor or services performed or materials furnished, and other charges against the subcontractors, have been paid in full and in accordance with the terms of the contract; that no liens have been attached against the property and improvements of owner; that no notice of intention to claim liens is outstanding; that no suits are pending by reason on the project under the contract; that all Worker's Compensation claims have been settled and no public liability claims are pending.

Affidavit is made for the purpose of reimbursement of funds according to the West Columbia Business Improvement Program.

Total of Paid Receipts submitted for reimbursement \$ _____

Business Owner's Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Property Owner's Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Attachments:

- _____ Copies of paid receipts
- _____ Photographs of completed work.
- _____ Other _____

Sworn to and subscribed before me, a notary public,

This _____ day of _____, _____.

(seal)

Notary Public Signature

INSPECTION

I CERTIFY that I have inspected the project and have found all improvements to be satisfactorily completed in accordance with the approved application and in compliance to any applicable city ordinances.

City Inspector's Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____