



MEMORANDUM

TO: Angela Threadgill, Planning and Economic Development Director

FROM: Shirley Baylis, Business Development Manager

*Recommended
for approval
Angela F. Threadgill*

CC: Austin Thomas, Economic Development Intern

RE: Commercial Buildout Improvement Grant Program

DATE: November 8, 2023

The purpose of this memorandum is to recommend approval to establish a Commercial Buildout Improvement Grant (CBIG) Program and to allocate a budget of \$75,000 from the Decatur Development Authority FY 2023-2024 budget in support of City of Decatur small business owners and commercial property owners in improvements, renovations and repairs to commercial retail spaces.

Program Overview

The CBIG Program aims to enhance commercial retail spaces in the City of Decatur. This program benefits various business types, such as retail services, food and beverage establishments, micro-manufacturing spaces, through reimbursement grants for internal building improvements. The program would complement the Commercial Façade Improvement Grant (CFIG) Program, which provides grants for external building improvements. The maximum CBIG grant amount is \$10,000, and the minimum participation is \$2,500. The program would provide a 75/25 matching grant, with 75% of the project expenses reimbursed through the CBIG program, up to \$10,000, and 25% of expenses incurred by the applicant. The DDA would issue the grant upon satisfactory completion of the qualified project, and after all necessary project expense documents have been submitted and approved by the program review committee. Project must be started within six (6) months of grant approval and completed within eighteen (18) months of grant approval. The grant awardees and their proposed projects would need to meet eligibility criteria and commit to specific funding requirements as a result of the award.

Applicant Eligibility Criteria

Eligible applicants must be a City of Decatur business or commercial property owner who meets the following criteria:

- The business or commercial property must be located in the City of Decatur.
- The business or commercial property owner has paid all appropriate taxes, fees and other assessments, including property taxes, business license fees, occupation taxes, ad valorem taxes.
- There are no outstanding judgements against the business or commercial property owner.
- There are no current proceedings in bankruptcy instituted by or against the business or property owner and no current assignment by the business or commercial property for the benefit of creditors.
- There are no state or federal tax liens presently pending against the business or the commercial property.
- Financial ability to commit matching grants.
- Prior property owner authorization, if small business owner is a lessee.
- For the purpose of receiving the grant, a small business is a business that does not operate more than three stores in the state of Georgia nor has more than 25 employees, and further qualify under the criteria set forth below.
 - Retail and Restaurant: If annual receipts do not exceed \$3.5 million
 - Personal and Professional Service: If annual receipts do not exceed \$3.5 million

Eligible Scope of Work

The following list of scope of work are eligible for consideration for the CBIG:

- Wall improvement/repair
- Floor improvement/repair
- Ceiling improvement/repair
- HVAC Installation
- ADA-accessibility improvement
- Sprinkler system installation/improvement
- Fire alarm system improvement

- Plumbing repair/replacement
- Grease trap replacement

Grant Review Committee

The Grant Review Committee shall be the same members as appointed to the Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program, which is made up of the following members:

- two members the Authority's Board
- one representative of the Historic Preservation Commission
- the Business Development Manager of the City of Decatur
- the Historic Preservation Planner of the City of Decatur

The Grant Review Committee will further establish qualifying criteria and standards for grant applicants, will establish requirements for applications and documentation submissions, will make recommendations to the Authority's Board for final action of grant applications, and will establish oversight and on-going submission obligations for each grantee.

The Grant Review Committee will determine its time of meeting; provided, that the Committee meet quarterly to review requests for grant applications. Should there be no receipt of grant applications, the Committee may cancel its meeting.

Grant Review Procedures

The Grant Review Committee will further establish grant review procedures and shall include the following:

1. Proposals being considered for funding must be submitted by the 15th of the month before the beginning of a quarter in which the Grant Review Committee will meet.
2. The applicant must complete and submit a CBIG application with all supporting documentation, as required by the Committee. The Business Development Manager will confirm that submission is complete and that the applicant meets eligibility criteria prior to further review by the Grant Review Committee.
3. The Grant Review Committee will review the application for qualifying project criteria. The Grant Review Committee may reject any grant application and will

- provide a written reason for rejection to the applicant.
4. The Grant Review Committee will provide a recommendation of approval for qualifying projects to the Authority's Board for final action.
 5. The Business Development Manager will notify each applicant in writing of the final action taken by the Authority's Board.

Qualifying Project Criteria

The Grant Review Committee will further establish qualifying project criteria and include the following:

- **Project Feasibility:** The project must be realistic and based on market conditions.
- **Project Compliance:** The project must be able to meet local codes and design standards, including treatment of any exterior historic building materials, and be able to secure necessary permits.
- **Project Scope:** The project improves the internal space of the property and would benefit the current retail and future tenants. If the project would only benefit the current business, the existing business that is the recipient of the grant must remain open in the location for a period of at least two (2) years from receipt of grant funds. If the applicant closes the business prior to the 2 years, the applicant will pay back funds to the Decatur Development Authority at a prorated amount based upon the difference of the date of closure or sale from 24 months.