



MEMORANDUM

TO: Angela Threadgill, Planning and Economic Development Director

FROM: Shirley Baylis, Business Development Manager

CC: Austin Thomas, Economic Development Intern

RE: Marketing and Digital Connectivity Grant Program

DATE: November 8, 2023

*Recommended
for approval
Angela F. Threadgill*

The purpose of this memorandum is to recommend approval to establish a Marketing and Digital Connectivity Grant (MDCG) Program and to allocate a budget of \$25,000 from the Decatur Development Authority FY 2023-2024 budget in support of City of Decatur retail and restaurant small business owners to improve the digital presence of their businesses by supporting the design and production of marketing materials and content for digital platforms.

Program Overview

The MDCG Program aims to improve the digital marketing presence of Decatur businesses by supporting the design and production of marketing materials and content for digital platforms. The program would offer the opportunity for approved business owners to receive a reimbursement, in the form of a grant. The maximum MDCG grant is \$2,500, and the minimum grant is \$250. The program will provide a 75/25 matching grant, with 75% of the project expenses reimbursed through the MDCG program, up to \$2,500, and 25% of expenses incurred by the applicant. The DDA will reimburse back to the applicant after all necessary project expense documents have been submitted and approved by the program review committee. Projects must be started within six (6) months of grant approval and completed within twelve (12) months of grant approval. The grant awardees and their proposed projects will need to meet certain 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.
- 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 MDCG:

- Brand and Logo design
- Website Design
- Video shoots/photoshoots
- Ad campaigns (e.g. Instagram, Facebook ads)

Grant Review Committee

The Grant Review Committee shall be made up of the following members:

- two members the Authority's Board
- the Business Development Manager of the City of Decatur
- the Communications Manager or staff representative 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 MDCG 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: Applicant must submit require a written marketing plan with the budget for the project that identify the 3-6-12 month goals.

- Project Scope: The project improves brand awareness, identify target audience, create better online marketing materials and content to attract more digital interactions and potentially bring more customers to City of Decatur businesses.