

**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 within the City of West Columbia, Texas, (the “City”) 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. The West Columbia Economic Development Corporation (the “WCEDC”) has budgeted \$25,000 per year to fund this grant program.

**Section 2. Types and Amounts of Grants**

- (A) **FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT:** Improvements to storefronts including, but not limited to, painting, reconstruction, and/or remodeling. The grant amount shall be equal to 50% of the cost of such improvements, up to a maximum of \$2,000.
- (B) **SIGN IMPROVEMENT:** New signs and/or renovation or removal of existing signs. The grant amount shall be equal to 50% of the cost of such improvements, up to a maximum of \$1,000.
- (C) **PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT:** Items such as, but not limited to landscaping, parking lot resurfacing, striping, driveway improvement, and lighting. The grant amount shall be equal to 50% of the cost of such improvements, up to a maximum of \$2,000.
- (D) **MURAL INCENTIVE:** Murals added to commercial buildings. The grant amount shall be equal to 50% of the cost of the mural, up to a maximum of \$2,500.

### **Section 3. Eligibility**

Any new business planning to locate within the City, or any existing business located within the city limits at the time of adoption of these guidelines, shall be eligible for this program.

### **Section 4. Application and Approval**

Applications filed with the Registered Agent 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. Applications are available at city offices at 512 E. Brazos Ave., West Columbia, Texas or online at [www.westcolumbiatx.org](http://www.westcolumbiatx.org).

### **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 to be operated within a leased facility and the owner of such lease facility must apply jointly for the program. Copies of a lease agreement, proof of ownership of the leased facility, and current tax receipt shall be required.
- (C) A business may apply for one (1) or more of the four types of grants set forth herein within any calendar year. A business that receives grant funding during a calendar 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 \$7,500 per calendar year. Such \$7,500 annual maximum shall only apply if all three grant types, as set forth in Section 2(A), (B), (C) and (D) hereof, are requested and approved.
- (E) All grants are reimbursement grants, and will only be funded after completion of the project and proof of receipts for all applicable materials and labor are submitted to the WCEDC. Photographs of the completed work shall also be required.
- (F) The applicant shall be obligated to make the improvements in accordance with the approved application. Thereafter, any modifications must be submitted in writing and approved by the WCEDC. Failure to obtain written approval prior to making any modifications shall render the applicant ineligible to receive grant funding.
- (G) The applicant shall be responsible for obtaining all applicable permits related to the improvement project, and comply with all current city ordinances. Failure to do so will render the applicant ineligible to receive grant funding. Failure to complete all of the stated improvements shall render the applicant ineligible to receive grant funding.

- (H) The applicant shall not begin any improvements prior to receiving written approval from the WCEDC. All improvement projects must be completed within six (6) 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 applicant. 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 inspector will approve the Certificate of Completion and submit to the Registered Agent for payment. The Registered Agent 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. 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 from one or more of the following programs during the fiscal year (October 1 to September 30). Funding assistance is approved 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 may be required when receipts are submitted.

- FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT     SIGN IMPROVEMENT     PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT  
 MURAL INCENTIVE

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: \_\_\_\_\_

**(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 Registered Agent, 512 E. Brazos Ave., West Columbia, Texas or mailed to P.O. Box 487, West Columbia, TX 77486

For more information, please call the office of the Registered Agent West Columbia Economic Development Corporation at (979) 345-3123.

Checklist:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Completed application
- \_\_\_\_\_ 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 Registered Agent	___/___/___
Submitted to WCEDC meeting on	___/___/___
Submitted to West Columbia City Council meeting on	___/___/___
Applicant notified of decision to approve/disapprove (10 days)	___/___/___
Completion deadline (6 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 of receipts submitted for reimbursement	\$ _____
Less 50%	- _____
Amount of eligible grant funding	\$ _____
Release of grant fund by Registered Agent Pd Amt. \$ _____ Ck # _____	___/___/___





**INSPECTION**

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

Inspector's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_