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**City of Seguin Business Improvement Grant (BIG)
Program Guidelines
2023-2024**

1. Purpose

The City of Seguin has developed the Business Improvement Grant Program to promote the development and expansion of new and existing business enterprises within the City of Seguin, Texas (the "City"), and enhance the economic welfare of the citizens of the City of Seguin by securing and retaining business enterprises and maintaining a higher level of employment, economic activity, and stability.

2. Eligible Improvements and Expenditures

Applicant may be eligible to receive up to a seventy-five percent (75%) matching grant, with a maximum grant awarded to an Applicant not to exceed \$10,000. Improvements and other expenditures eligible under the Seguin BIG Program include the following:

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| Façade Improvements | Improvements to building facades including, but not limited to, structural rehabilitation, awnings, painting, reconstruction, and/or remodeling. |
| Sign Improvements | New signs, and renovation or removal of existing signs. |
| Site Improvements | Items such as, but not limited to parking lot resurfacing, striping, driveway improvements, lighting, fencing, new curb and sidewalk, and landscaping. |
| Other Real Property Improvements | Improvements including, but not limited to replacing electrical wiring, plumbing, masonry repair, foundation stabilization, fire sprinkler or fire alarm system, HVAC systems, or other items that are plumbed, wired or otherwise permanently attached to a building structure, as approved by the City. |

3. Eligibility

Applicant seeking Grant funding must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- A. Eligible Applicant includes any new or existing for-profit business facilities, commercial property owner, or business tenant physically located within Seguin City Limits. Applicant's tax status will be verified with the State Comptroller's office.
- B. Businesses operating on the same property as the business owners' residence are not eligible.
- C. Applicants who have outstanding financial obligations to the City of Seguin and Guadalupe County, including but not limited to liens, court fines, delinquent City utility bills, or delinquent taxes are not eligible.
- D. Applicants are not eligible to receiving funding under the Seguin BIG Program if the Applicant is receiving funding under the Seguin Main Street FIX-IT Façade Grant Program for identical improvement projects.
- E. Applicants who have an ongoing lawsuit or are in any way parties to litigation against the City of Seguin are not eligible.
- F. Applicants are limited to receiving grant funding for only one (1) project in a 12-month period.
- G. Applicants who own multiple businesses and/or commercial properties within the City of Seguin can only receive grant funding for only one (1) project in a 12-month period.
- H. Applicant may be eligible to receive up to a 75 percent matching grant, with a maximum grant awarded to an Applicant not to exceed \$10,000.

4. Guidelines

- A. Applicant will be required to provide proof of ownership of an existing facility, or if Applicant is a business tenant (lessee), they must attach a copy of the lease agreement with the application.
- B. Grants awarded under the Seguin BIG Program are reimbursement grants. Reimbursement grants are a cash match for funds disbursed by the Applicant and are not to exceed the limits set forth. In-kind contributions may not be used as any part of the Applicant's match. Only cash matches of the Applicant's expenditures may be used.
- C. Improvements shall be made in accordance with project drawings, specifications, applicable codes, and/or other pertinent information provided in the application, such having been previously approved by the City. Failure to do so will render the Applicant ineligible to receive grant funding. Any modifications must first receive the written approval of the City. Failure to do so will likewise render the Applicant ineligible to receive grant funding.

- D. Applicant is obligated to obtain all applicable permits and inspections related to the improvement project. Failure to do so will render the Applicant ineligible for grant funding.
- E. The improvements, as presented in the application, must be completed in their entirety, unless otherwise approved by the City. Incomplete improvements will render the Applicant ineligible for grant funding.
- F. Upon approval of a grant application, and during the implementation of the improvements, a representative or representatives of the City shall have the right of access to inspect the work in progress.
- G. Improvements shall not commence prior to having received written approval for a grant from the City.
- H. Labor provided by the Applicant, or their employees may not be included in the cost estimate of the project and are not reimbursable through this Program.
- I. The Applicant must complete the improvement project within nine (9) months of receiving written approval therefore from the City. Failure to complete the improvements within the required time period will result in the loss of the grant funds allocated for the project.
- J. The Applicant must agree to remain in business and to not sell or assign such business to another person or entity for a period of twelve (12) months from the date of grant funding of his/her application.

5. Application & Approval

- A. Applications must be submitted through the BIG application portal which can be accessed by visiting: <https://bit.ly/sequin-big24>
- B. Applications will be reviewed internally by City of Seguin Economic Development and Main Street Staff.
- C. Applications are due by the close of business on the last day of each month. Applications submitted after the last day of the month will be reviewed the following month, subject to funding availability.
- D. Applications will be reviewed in the order they are received.
- E. Applicants will receive notification of their application status no later than the 20 days of the following month. (i.e., Application is submitted on January 17th. Applicant will receive notification of their application status no later than February 20th)
- F. The City will use the BIG Program Scoring Criteria to score applications and determine grant award. The scoring criteria is attached to these Guidelines as Exhibit "A".
- G. Projects that score below 55 points will not be eligible to receive funding.
- H. Only complete applications will be accepted. All applicable application fields must be completed, and all applicable attachments are also required to be submitted with the application.

- I. Incomplete applications will not be accepted. In the event an application is submitted and deemed incomplete, the Applicant will be notified. The incomplete application will be rejected, and the Applicant will be required to resubmit.
- J. All Applicants must include a signed W-9 form as an attachment to their application. Seguin BIG Program funding will be remitted to the entity named on the W-9.
- K. All Applicants must provide at least one (1) detailed estimate/quote of proposed improvements and or other eligible expenditures as an attachment to their application.
- L. If applicable, Applicant must include improvement project drawings and specifications as an attachment to their application.
- M. If applicable, Applicant must provide photos of the area to be improved as an attachment to their application.
- N. If Applicant is a business tenant (lessee), they must attach a copy of the lease agreement with the application.
- O. As an attachment to the application, Applicants are encouraged to provide any additional information about the project that would be beneficial in reviewing the application.
- P. The City reserves the right to utilize whatever outside resources it deems necessary for assistance in its decision-making process.
- Q. The City may award Applicant a grant with certain provisions, conditions, or other requirements as it may from time to time deem appropriate.
- R. The City reserves unto itself the absolute right of discretion in deciding whether to approve a grant relative to this application. The Applicant accepts that all decisions relating to the award of the grant funds involve subjective judgements on the part of the decision-making entity related to the aesthetics of the proposed project and the granting of award funds for said project.
- S. The City reserves the right to waive any requirement(s) herein contained, and/or add any requirement(s) it deems appropriate in making its determination of approval or disapproval of a grant(s) application.

6. Funding

- A. Applicant shall provide the City with written notification of project completion to the City. Such notification shall include a letter signed by the Applicant stating that all improvements have been completed in accordance with the application and/or approved modifications, and that full payment has been made for all labor and materials associated with the project. Such notification shall include documentation, not limited to, paid receipts for materials and labor, permits, inspection reports, project photographs, or any other items the City may deem necessary for determining the successful completion of the project.
- B. Upon receipt of a notification from the Applicant that the project has been completed, an on-site inspection may be made by a representative(s) of the City to confirm completion

in accordance with the application and/or approved modifications; such inspection shall not be considered in any way as a reflection of the City's approval on the quality, safety, or reliability of the improvements, such being the sole responsibility of the Applicant.

- C. Within thirty (30) days following the verification of completion of the project in accordance with the application, or any approved modifications thereto, the City will issue written notice to the Applicant confirming that the project has been deemed successfully complete, and the total grant award will be paid to the Applicant.
- D. Available funding: For Fiscal Year 2023-2024, the City has approved \$150,000 to fund the BIG program. Grant applications received after the available funding has been exhausted may be considered the following calendar year. The City retains sole discretion to accept or reject applications received after the available funding has been exhausted.

7. Default

- A. If the subject business is closed, sold, transferred, or relocated within a six (6) month period after grant funding is received, the Applicant shall be required to reimburse the City for 100% of the grant amount received. Thereafter, until the twelve (12) month anniversary date of grant funding the Applicant shall be required to reimburse the City for 50% of the grant amount received if the subject business is closed, sold, transferred, or relocated.
- B. Payments due must be paid in full within thirty (30) days after the date of written notification by the City that the Applicant is in default of any of the funding requirements set forth herein. The form of such payment shall be a cashier's check or money order, made payable to the City of Seguin.

8. Amendment

The City reserves unto itself the right to amend these Guidelines and Criteria as it may from time to time find desirable.

9. Notice

THE PROVISION OR DELIVERY OF THESE GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA TO AN INTERESTED PARTY DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN OFFER OF AN IMPROVEMENT GRANT TO THAT PARTY.

THE ADOPTION OF THESE GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA DOES NOT LIMIT THE DISCRETION OF THE CITY TO DECIDE WHETHER TO PROVIDE OR NOT PROVIDE A GRANT TO AN APPLICANT, WHICH ABSOLUTE RIGHT OF DISCRETION THE CITY RESERVES UNTO ITSELF, WHETHER OR NOT SUCH DISCRETION MAY BE DEEMED ARBITRARY OR WITHOUT BASIS IN FACT.

THE ADOPTION OF THESE GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA DOES NOT CREATE ANY PROPERTY, CONTRACT, OR OTHER LEGAL RIGHTS IN ANY PERSON TO HAVE THE CITY PROVIDE GRANT FUNDING.

THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF TEXAS SHALL GOVERN THE INTERPRETATION,

THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF TEXAS SHALL GOVERN THE INTERPRETATION, VALIDITY, PERFORMANCE, AND ENFORCEMENT OF THIS BUSINESS ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM. IF ANY PROVISION OF THIS PROGRAM SHALL BE HELD TO BE INVALID OR UNENFORCEABLE, THE VALIDITY AND ENFORCEABILITY OF THE REMAINING PROVISIONS OF THIS PROGRAM SHALL NOT BE AFFECTED THEREBY.

THE CITY, ITS EMPLOYEES, AND ITS AGENTS DO NOT ATTEST TO THE QUALITY, SAFETY, OR CONSTRUCTION OF A PROJECT ELIGIBLE FOR, OR RECEIVING GRANT FUNDING. THEREFORE, THE CITY, ITS EMPLOYEES, AND AGENTS SHALL BE HELD HARMLESS BY THE APPLICANT/APPLICANTS FOR ANY AND ALL DAMAGES ASSOCIATED WITH THE PLANNING, CONSTRUCTION, AND SUBSEQUENT EXISTENCE OF ANY PROJECT WHO'S APPLICATION HAS BEEN APPROVED OR HAS RECEIVED ACTUAL GRANT FUNDING.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA

I have received the Guidelines and Criteria associated with the City of Seguin Business Improvement Grant Program. I (WE), the undersigned APPLICANT(S), acknowledge and agree to abide by and be subject to the terms and conditions of the Business Improvement Grant Program as described herein.

Applicant Name

Title

Signature

Date



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City of Seguin Business Improvement Grant Application Score Sheet

(FORM TO BE COMPLETED BY CITY OF SEGUIN STAFF)

Business Name:	
Scoring Criteria	Score
<p>1. Grant History – Has the applicant been awarded a grant in the last 24 months?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 10 points: Has not been awarded a BIG grant within the last 24 months. ➤ 7 points: Awarded a grant in the last 24 and successfully completed a grant on time. ➤ 4 points: Awarded a grant in the last 24 and successfully completed a grant after requesting an extension. ➤ 0 points: Awarded a grant in the last 24 months and did not complete the work. 	
<p>2. Distressed Location – Is the Business located in an economically distressed US Census Tract?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 12 points: Business located within Census Tract designated as a “<u>High Poverty Area</u>” (20% of the population or more are below the poverty level). ➤ 8 points: Business located within Census Tract designated as a “<u>Possible High Poverty Area</u>” (The confidence interval includes “20% of the population or more are below the poverty level,” but the point estimate is lower than that threshold). ➤ 5 points: Business located within Census Tract designated as “<u>Not a High Poverty Area</u>” (areas that do not meet either of the criteria listed above). <p><small>Note: The City of Seguin will use the EDA-Census Poverty Status Viewer which was developed by the U.S. Census Bureau to support the Commerce Department’s Economic Development Administration (EDA). High poverty area estimates include poverty data for the population for whom poverty status is determined using the 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. The EDA-Census Poverty Status Viewer can be accessed by visiting:</small></p> <p><small>https://mtgis-portal.geo.census.gov/arcgis/apps/experiencebuilder/experience/?id=ad8ad0751e474f938fc98345462cdfb</small></p>	
<p>3. Business Location – Is the Business located on a key commercial corridor/area where revitalization is desired by the City of Seguin?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 12 points: Located on Kingsbury Street (US Hwy 90), Court Street, Austin Street (SH 123 Bus), Guadalupe Street, or within the Downtown Historic District ➤ 10 points: Located on I-10, SH 46, or SH 123 ➤ 5 points: Located on another commercial corridor not identified above 	

<p>4. Business Industry – Targeted business types that fill a need in Seguin such as retail and restaurants. If applicant is a commercial property owner, score will be based on intended use of property.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 12 points: Retail, restaurants ➤ 10 points: Hotel, hair salon ➤ 8 points: Office/Professional ➤ 4 points: Manufacturing/Industrial ➤ 2 points: Other 	
<p>5. Improvement Type – What type of improvements are being proposed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 12 points: Façade Improvements and Sign Improvements ➤ 10 points: Site Improvements ➤ 8 points: Other Real Property Improvements 	
<p>6. Size of Business – How many employees does the Business have?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 12 points: 10 or fewer ➤ 10 points: 11 to 25 ➤ 4 points: 26 to 75 ➤ 2 points: 76 to 150 	
<p>7. Business Ownership – Is the Business locally owned versus corporate owned?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 10 points: Owned locally. ➤ 8 points: Local franchisee owned. ➤ 4 points: Corporate owned or out of town franchisee owned 	
<p>8. Project Valuation – What is the total cost of project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 10 points: over \$100,000 ➤ 8 points: \$50,000 to \$99,999 ➤ 6 points: \$15,000 to \$49,999 ➤ 4 points: Below \$14,999 	
<p>9. Utility Customer – Is the business a utility customer of the City of Seguin?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 10 points: All three city utilities ➤ 8 points: Two city utilities ➤ 6 points: One city utility 	
<p>TOTAL POINTS</p>	