



**ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION**

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Mayor Donna Dodgen  
Seguin City Council

**CC:** Steve Parker, City Manager  
Andy Quittner, City Attorney

**From:** Josh Schneuker, Director of Economic Development

**Date:** July 19, 2021

**Subject:** Establishing the Seguin Business Improvement Grant Program

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## **Program Overview**

Staff is proposing the creation of a Business Improvement Grant (BIG) Program to promote the development and expansion of new and existing business enterprises within the City of Seguin 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. The BIG Program Guidelines were created using elements of Main Street's FIX-IT Façade Grant Program, the Seguin Strong Stimulus Program, and other BIG Programs that are implemented in other municipalities across the State. A copy of the proposed Seguin BIG Program Guidelines are attached to this memo. Staff is proposing that the Seguin BIG Program receive an allocation of \$250,000 to fund the program. Funding allocation to create the BIG Program will come from CARES Act Funding that the City of Seguin previously allocated to the General Fund.

Applicants may be eligible to receive up to a 75 percent matching grant with a maximum of \$10,000 in each of the following categories:

- 1. Façade Improvement:** Improvements to storefronts, including but not limited to, items such as painting, reconstruction, and remodeling.
- 2. Sign Improvement:** New signs, and renovation or removal of existing signs.
- 3. Property Improvement:** Items such as, but not limited to parking lot resurfacing, striping, driveway improvements, lighting, decorative fencing, new curb and sidewalk, demolition and/or removal of dilapidated structures.
- 4. Interior and/or Business Machinery/Equipment Improvements:** Items such as, but not limited to replacing electrical wiring, plumbing, masonry repair, foundation stabilization, asbestos and lead abatements, fire sprinkler or fire alarm system, HVAC and any other business machinery and/or equipment as approved by the City BIG Review Committee.
- 5. Demolition:** Demolition of abandoned signs and structures.
- 6. COVID-19 Pandemic Related Business Improvements:** Items such as, but not limited to Property and Interior and/or Business Machinery/Equipment Improvements made by the applicant between March 1,

2020, and March 10, 2021, in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, as approved by the City BIG Review Committee.

- 7. COVID-19 Pandemic Related Business Impacts:** Items such as, but not limited to past-due commercial rent payments, past-due commercial utility payments, licensing payments, and mixed-beverage tax paid by the applicant between March 1, 2020, and March 10, 2021, as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, and as approved by the City BIG Review Committee.

## **Grant Funding**

The Seguin BIG Program funding will only be provided on a reimbursement basis upon the completion of the project. An applicant will be required to provide the City with written notification of project completion. 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 involved in the project. Also included in such notification shall be such documents as, but not limited to, paid receipts for materials and labor, permits, inspection reports, project photographs, or any other items the City may reasonably deem necessary for determining the successful completion of the project.

## **Eligibility**

Eligible applicants include any new or existing for-profit business facilities, commercial property owner, or business tenant physically located within the Seguin City Limits. Businesses operating on the same property as the business owners' residence are not eligible. Applicants identified as Business Tenants will be required to provide written approval from property owner authorizing the improvements being made under the grant program. Applicants seeking Seguin BIG Program funding under Section 5.G – COVID-19 Pandemic Related Business Impacts, must be classified within an industry groups considered "non-essential" during Stay Home, Work Safe orders, and must be able to demonstrate a high level of impact to their typical operations, and a reduction in revenue and/or employment between March 1, 2020, and March 10, 2021, as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. 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.

Applicants who have outstanding financial obligations to the City of Seguin, including but not limited to liens, court fines, delinquent City utility bills, or delinquent taxes are not eligible. Applicants that received funding through the Seguin Strong Stimulus Program that are not in-compliance with the terms of their agreement with the City are not eligible. Applicants who have an ongoing lawsuit or are in any way parties to litigation against the City of Seguin are not eligible.

## **Guidelines**

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. Any modifications to the plans must first receive the written approval of the City. The Applicant is obligated to obtain all applicable permits and inspections related to the improvement project. The improvements, as presented in the application, must be completed in their entirety, unless otherwise approved by the City. Upon approval of a grant

application, and during the implementation of the improvements, the City shall have the right of access to inspect the work in progress. Improvements may not commence prior to having received written approval for a grant from the City. Improvements must be completed within nine (9) months of the funding approval. The grant will automatically terminate if the project is not completed within nine (9) months of City approval of the grant application. All applications must contain a cost estimate (bid) from a minimum of two (2) qualified contractors or suppliers. Labor provided by the Applicant or his/her employees may not be included in the cost estimate of the project and is not reimbursable through this Program.

### **Application and Approval**

Applications will be accepted and considered on a monthly basis and will be reviewed and scored internally by the City of Seguin BIG Program Review Committee. The Review Committee will be comprised of the City's Director of Economic Development, the City's Assistant Director of Economic Development, the City's Director of Main Street, the City's Assistant Director of Main Street, and the City Manager.

### **Staff Recommendation**

Staff is recommending approval of the Resolution establishing the Seguin Business Improvement Grant Program.