



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Overview

In 2005, the City of Athens created Type B Economic Development Corporation by a majority vote of the citizens to allow the allocation of sales tax for economic and community development projects. One of the main functions of the Athens Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) is to provide incentives to companies to invest in the community and create jobs. A second function is to improve the quality of life of the citizens of Athens by granting funds for community development.

Purpose

The purpose of the Community Development Grant program is to proactively work in partnership with community groups to promote and fund community, cultural and economic development projects that maintain and enhance the quality of life in Athens.

Project Requirements

The Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 505 outlines the types of projects eligible for consideration by a Type B Economic Development Corporation. These projects must enhance the quality of life in Athens and advance the mission of AEDC. Proceeds may be used for land, buildings, equipment, expenditures, and improvements suitable for the following types of projects:

- Professional or amateur sports athletic facilities, including stadiums and ball parks.
- Entertainment, tourism, and convention facilities, including auditoriums, amphitheaters, concert halls, museums and exhibition facilities.
- Public parks, park facilities and events, and related open space improvements.
- Projects that the board of Director's determines promotes or develops new or expanded business enterprises that create or retain primary jobs.
- Type B sales tax proceeds may only be used for funding events, operating expenditures and improvements made at a venue in which Type B sales tax was used for construction.

Guidelines

- Entity must have been in business/operation within the city limits of Athens for a minimum of two (2) years prior to application submittals.
- Project/Promotion/Community Event must demonstrate how it will advance the mission and support the goals of AEDC as outlined above.
- Projects must be for public use or otherwise meet the definition of "Project" as that term is defined in state law.
- Projects must demonstrate a positive impact to the community.

Guidelines (continued)

- For Project grants, the Applicant must own the land or facility where the proposed project will be located. If the Applicant does not own the land, written acknowledgement/approval from the property owner must be included with the application. The letter must document the property owner is aware of the proposed use of the property or facility; and the property owner has reviewed the project plan and application, approves and supports the efforts of the Applicant.
- Preference may be given to Applicants who have not received funding from AEDC within the previous 12-month period.
- Preference may be given to Applicants who develop and demonstrate multiple revenue streams to financially support the project for which grant funds are requested.
- Approved project must be completed within one year, or consistent with performance agreement.
- Performance agreements will be required for all approved grants.
- Applications must be completed in full, providing all information requested, to be considered by the AEDC board.

Application Process

Applications are available at athenstexasedc.com. They may also be obtained by emailing vfranklin@athenstx.gov. Deadlines for submission under project cycles are strictly followed. The completed application and all supporting documents are required to be submitted electronically for consideration by the AEDC Grant Committee and will become a public record unless excluded by law. Please call Elizabeth Borstad at 903-675-5131 in advance to discuss application prior to completing the form and submitting the information requested.

Applicant must provide the following with the application:

- History of the organization,
- Description of the proposed project,
- Budget including total project cost, amount requested from AEDC and applicant contribution,
- Project timetable,
- Bids obtained from contractors for the project,
- Copy of IRS form for tax exempt status (Form 1023 “Application for Recognition of Exemption under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code”), and
- List of staff and Board of Directors and Officers.

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Review Process

The Grant Review Committee (GRC) comprised of AEDC Board Members and staff is responsible for the review of all grant applications. The GRC will make recommendations for approval to the AEDC Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will hold a public meeting to discuss the applications, the GRC's recommendations and provide the applicant with time to address questions concerning the project. The AEDC Board will by majority vote award grant funds to the projects that meet the criteria and score the highest.

Evaluation

GRC will consider the following information when evaluating applications for recommendation to AEDC Board:

- Application was completed in full,
- Availability of grant funds,
- Applicant's funding history,
- Eligibility under state law,
- Alignment with AEDC mission and strategic priorities,
- Evidence of public and private financial support,
- Potential to achieve project goals,
- Will have a positive impact on Athens, and
- Applicant's financial stability.

Scoring

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points
Project has matching funds	20*
Develops tourism	20
Education/training skills	15
Quality of life (cultural/fine arts/entertainment/sports)	15
Project improves city infrastructure/open space	10
Targets community need	10
Enhances underutilized facilities	10
Total possible points	100

*(*Matching funds scoring is 0-10 points if match is less than dollar for dollar, 11-15 points if match is a dollar for dollar, 16-20 points if match is greater than dollar for dollar)*

If project is funded, Grantee must recognize Athens Economic Development Corporation as a sponsor/funder of the Project in all advertising, publicity and promotional vehicles, using the following (or substantially similar) verbiage:

“This Community Development Project is funded in part by the citizens of Athens and the Athens Economic Development Corporation.”

AEDC will provide camera-ready logo art for placement on promotional and publicity materials, if applicable.