



H-GAC DOWNTOWN PUBLIC SPACES IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

H-GAC, in coordination with the Houston Galveston Area Local Development Corporation (H-GALDC) is pleased to issue this request for proposals for the Downtown Public Spaces improvements Program. Instructions and application procedures follow:

PROGRAM SCOPE

- A. Goal:** Funds available through this program will be used to improve the public spaces in the Downtown areas of communities in the H-GAC region. The program will benefit the region by making Downtown areas more attractive and increasing local economic vitality, sales tax and property values, while preserving and enhancing their architectural and cultural history.
- B. Objectives:**
- Stimulate reinvestment and commercial activity in Downtown areas
 - Restore and preserve the historical fabric and character of the region's communities
 - Eliminate blight conditions in downtown areas
- C. Eligible Areas:**
- Project area must be located in a Downtown area or a recognized community gateway of a community in the H-GAC region
- D. Eligible Improvements:** Eligible improvements include, but are not limited to the following:
- Repair, replacement or new installation of streetscape improvements including landscaping, sidewalks, street lighting, street amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, fountains, sculpture, monuments and the like
 - Repair, replacement or new installation of canopies and awnings
 - Repair of historic facades
 - Restoration of historic signage
- E. Use of Proceeds:** Funding may be used for:
- Materials and labor costs for eligible improvements
 - Architectural and design costs for eligible improvements
- E. Program Eligibility:**
- Qualifying improvements must be a part of a City-approved plan
 - Qualified applicants include but are not limited to municipalities, their affiliates and other special purpose units of local government, as well as civic oriented non-profit organizations.
- F. Policy and Conditions of the Grant Program:**
- Matching grant amounts will be awarded for 50% of the total estimated cost of the improvements
 - Maximum grant amount awarded will be \$25,000
- G. Reimbursement Procedure:** As a general rule, all local funding for a project must be expended prior to the use of the grant funding. Matching grant funds will be disbursed at the completion of improvements and with the acceptance of work by H-GAC Staff. Documentation of proof of payment must be submitted with a written request for reimbursement. *Acceptable proofs of payment for reimbursement include, but are not limited to the following:*

- Itemized contractor and/or sub-contractor's invoices with the corresponding receipts and /or cancelled checks
 - Paid Invoices for materials and/or supplies with the corresponding receipts and/or cancelled checks, or
 - A release of lien from contractors, sub-contractors, and/or suppliers (A sample of the release of lien is available upon request)
 - The applicant will supply any additional documentation as required by the H-GAC to confirm expenses.
- H. Project Duration:** Approved Construction must begin within sixty (60) days from the date of grant approval, and must be completed within one hundred and eighty (180) days. The need for a longer term will be addressed on an individual basis.
- I. Changes to Approved Scope of Work:** Funding will not be awarded for any changes under construction without prior approval. Significant changes to the scope of work will require the authorization of the H-GALDC. Minor changes may be approved by staff.
- J. Eligible Labor:** Matching grant monies may not be used to pay a property owner or members of the owner's family for labor on the project.
- K. Grant Limitations:** Matching grants shall be processed on a first come – first served basis, as grant monies are limited, and can be competitive. Consideration will include the necessity of the repairs or improvements, the potential economic benefit to the area and the general public, and the historic significance of the structure. Matching grants may be used for approved work only. The total of H-GAC funded grants from the Downtown Public Spaces Improvements Program for a single project may not exceed the combined total of \$25,000 unless approved by H-GAC and the H-GALDC.

INITIATING REQUESTS FOR THE DOWNTOWN PUBLIC SPACES IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

Interested eligible entities should contact the H-GAC Community and Environmental Planning Department at (713) 993-2459 to arrange a meeting with staff to discuss the Downtown Public Spaces Improvements Grant Program process.

The eligible applicant will meet with staff to discuss the proposed improvements. A walk through of the property will be scheduled, if necessary. Staff will review the application process, and assist the owner in preparation as needed. The applicant will work with contractors/architects/engineers to determine improvement specifics and to obtain required cost estimates.

The applicant will submit the following:

- Completed application
- Written description of project improvements
- Current photographs of the property
- Drawings or plans detailing the planned improvement
- Two (2) itemized cost estimates from two independent sources

Staff will review the provided information and will request additional information if needed. Staff will approve or deny the design proposal. If approved, proceed to next step. Once the design proposal has been approved, staff will place the grant request onto the next H-GALDC agenda for final funding approval. Once funding is approved, a preconstruction meeting may be held if necessary and the project will begin.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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