

FOA # AD – 10202011  
RETAIL CENTER REVITALIZATION SUMMIT

Answers to all questions received regarding the Mississippi Development Authority pilot program, Retail Center Revitalization announced September 7, 2011, are posted below.

NOTE: All Applicants must read and follow the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) and complete the Application in full to be considered. This is a highly competitive program and not all Applicants will receive funding. The FOA document outlines the required preparation for successful applications. A copy of the FOA is available at the [www.mississippi.org](http://www.mississippi.org) web site.

1. QUESTION

Will the old Sear's building qualify as a strip center?

ANSWER

Yes, and the Wal-Marts, K-Mart, and other big box type stores will also qualify provided they satisfy the FOA location requirement.

2. QUESTION

Can the local economic development organization be a party to the MOU?

ANSWER

The FOA indicates the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has to be an agreement with one of Mississippi's Planning and Development Districts (PDD), the local unit of government, and the property owner but working closely with the local ED office will add credits to the overall scoring process. MDA hosted a webinar on September 15, 2011, to provide detail explanations of the FOA. An Archived version of the webinar can be found at:

<http://www.mississippi.org/mda-library-resources/programs/webinar-archives/>

3. QUESTION

How will the projects be selected at the local level?

ANSWER

The process to promote and select will be the option of the local unit of government. We envision that the cities and/or counties will promote the project to those landowners that would make the biggest improvement to the appearance of an area coming into downtown and then

have their own selection criteria to compliment and maximum the downtown development strategy.

#### 4. QUESTION

Can public property qualify?

#### ANSWER

Yes, publically owned strip centers can qualify, but then the public entity will responsible for the match required to obtain the grant funds.

#### 5. QUESTION

What is the due date?

#### ANSWER

The deadline for submitting proposals is Oct 20, 2011, at 3:00 P.M. Central Time, Jackson, MS. However, the PDD in coordination with the local units of government can set guidelines and timelines which best benefits their needs.

#### 6. QUESTION

Can the PDD's have more than one project?

#### ANSWER

Yes, they are allowed to work with more than one unit of government but each unit of government can have only one application. A city or town within a county can have a project and the county can have a project.

#### 7. QUESTION

Can part of the match dollars come from interior improvements?

#### ANSWER

No, this grant is intended for public-facing exterior improvements, no state funds may be used for interior upgrades to the facilities, nor will interior capital improvements be counted toward the 50% match requirement.

## 8. QUESTION

Do the PDDs get paid?

## ANSWER

Yes, there will be no funds available for application preparation, but for approved projects the PDDs can collect up to \$1,500.00 for administration and handling of the approved projects.

## 9. QUESTION

Is there a timeline to complete the project?

## ANSWER

Yes, work has to begin within 90 days of the signing of the grant agreement, and for this program, beginning work is defined as execution of a construction contract. Projects have to be completed in 12 months of the execution of the grant agreement.

## 10. QUESTION

67% of retail sales happen after 6:00 and on Sunday. If the final development includes retail, would it be possible to require extended business hours? Closing at 5:00 p.m. and on weekends is one of the biggest problems limiting retail sales.

## ANSWER

Refer to page 4 of the FOA, local units of government are required to set their own guidelines and requiring certain store hours could be a local requirement.

## 11. QUESTION

Does the building have to be vacant if you want to turn a parking lot into public space?

## ANSWER

It would be up to the community to select the project that will result in the maximum economic impact for the area and which will play an integral role in the other planned development. If you choose to select a parking lot for project, the parking needs of the buildings serviced by the parking lot would need to be considered, but vacant or filled would be the local unit of government's decision.

## 12. QUESTION

Would closed and vacant stores adjacent to each other in a Downtown area be eligible?

## ANSWER

No, "The strip center must be located on a main public thoroughfare leading into a downtown or town center;"