

Mississippi Development Authority

Mississippi Site Development Grant Program

GUIDELINES

FISCAL YEAR 2018

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

The Mississippi Site Development Grant Program assists public or private non-profit economic development organizations or local governments in the development of green field sites for industrial development. Matching grants of up to \$50,000 for *Ready Site* or \$250,000 for *Premier Site* are available for approved applications. MDA will fund site applications from across the state.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Mississippi Site Development Program is designed to assist local partners develop Ready Sites and Premier Sites to increase the number of competitive sites available for industrial development in Mississippi.

A *Ready Site* is defined as a property which satisfactorily meets the minimum criteria for a competitive, marketable site and is ready for a project within an expedited timeframe. Ready Sites are classified as sites with a minimum of 20 highly-developable acres, site-work ready within six (6) months and can have utilities on site in twelve (12) months. Rail-served sites are preferred.

A *Premier Site* is defined as a property which satisfactorily meets the desired development criteria of its potential market and has additional differentiating or distinguishing site location attributes (e.g. high demand locations, intermodal and/or port access, large-scale “mega” development acreage, significant utility infrastructure, etc.). Premier Sites must have a minimum of 200 acres with a labor force able to attract the intended market. A workforce study is required. Rail-served sites are preferred.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Activities funded under the Mississippi Site Development Grant Program should be consistent with the recruitment strategy and industrial park development plan for the benefitting site. Local partners (county, municipality and public or private nonprofit economic development entities including, but not limited to, local authorities, commissions, or other entities created by local and private legislation) are eligible to apply. Applicants are advised to carefully review the required checklist located on page three of the application form before submitting a grant application. The checklist must be signed and included in the application.

ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES

State statute requires that Mississippi Site Development Grant Program Funds be expended on industrial property owned or associate with property that is publicly owned.

Eligible expenditures as stated in statute include:

- Architectural fees,
- Design and engineering fees,
- Environmental studies/assessments,
- Attorney fees,
- Fees for consultants or agents that MDA determines necessary to complete site diligence,
- Geotechnical and/or resistivity testing,
- Clearing/grading,
- Environmental mitigation or purchase of mitigation credits,
- Drainage system improvements,

- Right of way and easement acquisition,
- Utility system expansions and/or distribution,
- Transportation directly effecting site (roads, bridges or rail),
- Bulkheads,
- Land reclamation,
- Industrial park “getaway” signage and/or aesthetic improvements,
- On-site demolition (old houses, barns, etc.) subject to cultural review, and
- Site development improvements as approved by MDA.

Eligible expenses incurred after July 1, 2017 may be included.

PROCESS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Ready Site Grant Program

This program will support sites attempting to meet minimum criteria required for *Ready Sites*.

- MDA will provide grants to Local Partners on a reimbursable basis so they may perform due diligence/site development improvements to meet the minimum requirements.
- **Funding Guidelines**
 - MDA funds must match funds from other sources (excluding other grants administered by MDA) and will not be the primary funding vehicle.
 - The maximum grant will be \$50,000 or 50% of the total cost of all the due diligence/site development improvements required, whichever is less.
 - Growth and Prosperity (GAP) *designated* counties are only required to submit 25% percent of match funding for the Ready Site program only.
 - In-kind services will be valued as part of the required match if they are directly related to the costs of due diligence/site development requirements.
 - MDA will only fund elements of due diligence/site development improvements if funds are secured or pledged to finish all minimum criteria required. For example, MDA will not fund a Phase I environmental site assessment if there are no resources available to undertake a wetlands delineation, a cultural resources assessment, etc., if needed.

Premier Site Grant Program

Funds will be used to support the development of sites in areas of high demand or with other attributes which make them particularly differentiated and competitive.

- MDA will only consider approving grant funds in support of sites which have been identified by a site location consultant as meeting the criteria of a Premier Site.
- MDA will provide grants to local partners on a reimbursable basis so due diligence/site development improvements may be performed and afford other allowable expenses required to address the needs identified by the consultant.
- **Funding Guidelines**
 - MDA funds must match funds from other sources (excluding other grants administered by MDA) and will not be the primary funding vehicle.
 - The maximum grant will be \$250,000 or 50% of the total cost of all the due diligence/site development improvements required, whichever is less.
 - In-kind services will be valued as part of the required match if they are directly related to the costs of due diligence/site development improvements.

Each application will be reviewed objectively and solely on the merits of the proposed site enhancement and its potential for improving industrial recruitment efforts. No applicant is guaranteed funding if basic qualifying criteria are met. The merit of each application will be reviewed in both an individual and comparative context with other applications under consideration AFTER the basic qualifying criteria are met. All grant recipients will be notified in writing of the decision. Projects not completed within twelve (12) months that show evidence of progress as determined by the MDA Grants Review Committee will be considered for funding. Projects with no tangible progress may be rejected for funding and can be submitted for consideration in the future. MDA reserves the right to negotiate the scope and budget as part of the

application review. The results of the review may impact the level of funding participation, if any. Incomplete applications will be returned.

Applicants will be accountable for all monies awarded and responsible for submission and tracking of all research, expenses and measurement of project results. Eligible and applicable costs will be reimbursed after submission and approval of the applicant's final report, which must be submitted to the MDA within 60 days of the projects approved, estimated completion date. Funding will be available *only* after project completion.

CHANGES IN PROJECT/PROJECT COSTS

If a project's scope changes during the development stages, the grant recipient must write to the MDA Existing Industry and Business Division for approval. The letter must state the project name, grant fund number, requested change, reasons for wanting to change, and any alterations in cost. Project changes will be submitted to the MDA Grants Review Committee for consideration.

If the total cost of the completed project is less than the provided estimate, the organization will be awarded the designated percentage (50%) of the lesser amount. If the completed project cost is higher than the approved project cost, the organization will receive only the amount listed in the grant award notification letter.

PROJECT COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

All projects receiving a grant must adhere to the following rules before request for payment can be processed and payment made:

- The application packet must include a copy of the application with attachments and a copy of the signed Required Attachments checklist.
- The applicant must sign and return the letter of confirmation and Tax ID form within 15 working days after notification of grant approval or the project may not be approved for funding.
- The applicant must have a current W-9 form with a Federal Tax ID Number on file at MDA.
- The applicant must return a complete final report to the MDA Existing Industry and Business Division no later than 60 days from the approved completion date or the project may be rejected for funding.
- The applicant must list the project name (as listed on the grant application form) and the grant fund number (as listed in the award letter) in all correspondence regarding an approved project.
- A copy of vendor invoices and a copy of proof of payment to vendors must be provided with all the invoices submitted to MDA with request for payment. (Examples of proof of payment include: canceled checks, bank statements, vendor receipts, etc.)

Funding will not be dispersed until the final report is submitted, accepted and approved by MDA. Reimbursement payments will be made by direct deposit if the organization has previously completed documentation for this process. Otherwise, a check will be issued upon approval.

**Mississippi Development Authority
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