

# Façade Grant Guidelines



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## FACADE GRANT OVERVIEW 1.1

The Sonora Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) has created this program to improve the visual appearance and economic vitality of Sonora, Texas by supporting improvements of commercial, retail, and office structures through local grant programs funded by sales tax. Sales tax is collected from the 8.25% paid on taxable items at local stores and online shopping, 6.25% goes to the State of Texas and 2% stays local. The goal of this program is to strengthen the property values, improve safety, and make it aesthetically appealing to our community residents and visitors. Improvements are aimed at a widespread revitalization and property value improvements throughout the community and are not restricted to a specific area of our community.

This package contains the guidelines for the program, criteria, and processes.

If you are not sure if your improvement will fall under this grant program, please contact our office and our executive director will be happy to review your project idea. 325-387-6280.

The SEDC reserves the right to update the program guidelines at any time and applicants are encouraged to review guidelines on the website or contact the office for most current program guidelines and not save the program guidelines as they may have been updated.

## BUSINESS ELIGIBILITY 2.1

The Sonora Economic Development Corporation strongly believes in an equal opportunity for all businesses and does not unlawfully discriminate against businesses or business owners on the basis of an individual's race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, veteran status or any other status protected by applicable law. This program eligibility applies to all businesses, eligibility standards are set for compliance of Local Government Code 501.251:

- 1. Must be an existing commercial property or a business detached from residential structures.**
- 2. Must be registered in Sonora or have a DBA in Sonora.**
- 3. Must provide proof of current sales tax, property tax, franchise tax, excise taxes and/or any other taxes applicable to the business.**
- 4. Must provide proof of Texas Workforce Commission Unemployment Quarterly Reports.**
- 5. Must provide proof of filed; FICA (federal payroll tax) payments form 941, and FUTA (Federal Unemployment Tax Act) form 940**
- 6. Must provide financial statements if requested by SEDC.**
- 7. Tenants must have a letter of project approval from property owner.**
- 8. All applicants must have a signed Permit Request Letter from Sonora Code Enforcement Officer for consideration of application.**
- 9. Property must be occupied by a business or have an agreement for occupancy.**

## GENERAL CONDITIONS 2.2

The SEDC is not responsible for project cost overruns, all risks associated with a project should be accounted for prior to grant approval. Covering cost overruns could result in less funding for other local business project requests due to SEDC annual budget allotments. Any change requests made to the approved project must be submitted to the SEDC prior to start of project, to include but not limited to equipment models, layout for construction, different materials, change of contractor. Project management

is the sole responsibility of the applicant and SEDC is not responsible for damages, work warranties, or any actions of contractors for projects partially or fully funded by SEDC programs. All projects under this program are subject to annual budget set by Board of Directors and approved by City Council, applications will be accepted from **October 1st to May 15th the preceding year, earliest date for funding is December 1, an announcement of early program closure will be made if program budget has been met for fiscal year. Applicants that missed application deadline or program was closed due to meeting program budget will have an opportunity to apply on October 1st.** To ensure every business is given an opportunity to apply for the program **business requests are capped annually at \$7,000 per business for all eligible improvements defined in section 2.3.** Additional General

Conditions:

1. **Business must provide 50/50 match for all projects, businesses cannot be awarded a grant within a consecutive year and must wait until the following year to reapply.**
2. All projects are required to enter into a Performance Agreement for compliance of Local Government Code 501.158.
3. **All improvements must be maintained for a minimum of one (1) year, projects over \$3,000 may require longer maintenance and will be outlined in the Performance Agreement.**
4. All projects require a public notice in the local newspaper and a (sixty) 60 day wait time after newspaper notice in accordance with Local Government Code 505.160. Façade Grant Program is treated as a project, individual projects for businesses within guidelines for program are not subject to Local Government Code 501.160. **Applications submitted between October 1 and November 30 can be funded by December 1.**
5. **All improvement and repair projects must have a completion date, applicants needing an extension for completion must request the extension fourteen (14) days before the original date. Projects must be fully funded by business before grant funding is released.**
6. **Projects that do not adhere to Performance Agreement are subject to a “clawback” clause.**

### ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS 2.3

This program is limited to façade type of improvements, **façade is defined as “the face of a building, especially the principal front that looks onto a street or open space”** rear or sides of buildings **NOT** facing or seen from a public road will not qualify for façade program, however, may qualify for a different program and business owners are encouraged to explore options with the executive director.

- **Signs, brackets, LEDs (electronic signs)**
- **Cleaning such as power washing**
- **Exterior lighting fixtures (must be attached to building)**
- **Sidewalks attached to building**
- **Canopies or window awnings**
- **Replacement of broken windowpanes, frames, broken store front glass, and doors**
- **Parking lot repairs such as paving, pothole repair, parking space repaint (NO public roads)**
- **Gutters or down spouts**
- **Scraping, priming, and painting exterior to include murals and artwork on building façade**
- **Exterior preservation treatments such as for wood, stone, and tile**
- **Landscape must include irrigation or drip system (if applicable)**

### NON-ELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS 2.4

- **Interior remodeling or renovation**
- **Fencing**
- **Security features such as cameras and burglar bars**
- **Grease traps**
- **Roof repairs**
- **New construction**
- **Construction/Repairs that has already been performed prior to approval of the project.**

## IN-KIND SERVICES 2.5

On a case-by-case basis the SEDC authorizes in-kind services provided by family, friends, and employees such as prepping and painting. **Repairs such as but not limited to LED signs, lighting, and irrigation MUST be completed by a certified and registered contractor with the City of Sonora Code Enforcement Officer.**

## PROJECT REVIEW POLICIES 3.1

### Executive Director Review 3.1a

The SEDC Executive Director is responsible for the evaluation of all applications for project requirements under the program. **The SEDC will contact applicant within ten (10) business days after the first day of application submission**, example: application submitted on Monday, ten (10) business days starts on Tuesday.

### Application Requirements 3.1b

- **Project Application**
- **Business Project Analysis**
- **Project Supply Estimate or Two (2) Project Bids (if applicable)**
- **Photos of Needed Repairs or Plans/Designs/Sketches/Photos of Equipment**
- **Signed letter from City of Sonora Code Enforcement Officer**
- **Letter of Approval from Property Owner (if applicable)**

### Review Criteria 3.1c

**The project review process is based on the order received and are given a rating for each of the following criteria with a 15-point maximum.** This review criteria helps prioritize projects for grants that are submitted incomplete early in the fiscal year, to provide approval to projects with a complete package later in the fiscal year. Incomplete project packages will be placed back in review once the business has submitted required documentation, **applicant will have 30 days to submit requested documents or application will be terminated and applicant will have to reapply, and the process will start anew:**

- A complete and accurate application is imperative, to avoid delays in the review process.  
(Complete/accurate first time +2)



- Project should improve property appearance and complement surrounding properties. Please ensure to include as much detail of the project such as colors, styles, and examples/designs. (Details on project submitted +1)
- Project should have an economic impact to increase the business property and surrounding property values, it should also encourage additional investments or property expansions such as interior updates at owner's expense. (Additional investments without grant assistance +3)
- Project MUST conform to City of Sonora regulations and permitting procedures, as well as State and Federal regulations such as but not limited to TXDOT. (Permits or letter submitted with application +2)
- Project costs are reviewed for reasonableness of cost, and can be compared with other similar projects, the SEDC requires a minimum of two (2) bids on the project if project requires certified contractor. (Breakdown of supply costs if work performed by owner +3)
- The use of local vendors for projects is HIGHLY encouraged when available to promote a local economic impact for all businesses. (Use of local vendors or contractors +4)

#### Funding 3.1d

Project approval amount and actual funding amount may differ based on submitted proof of payments to SEDC for contractors or vendors. **It is imperative to submit all receipts, proof of processed checks or money orders, invoices and alike to ensure that funding for project is what was requested.**

#### Open 3.1e

**\*\*OPEN\*\***

## PROGRAM PROCESS 3.2

### Project Analysis 3.2a

Upon completion of Executive Directors review of application completeness, adherence to project guidelines, and submission of any additional documentation. The Executive Director will conduct a project analysis which consists of:

1. Review of documents listed in “Business Eligibility 2.1”
2. Grading project based on “Review Criteria 3.1c”
3. Business financial liquidity and solvency (in applicable)

### Approval Process 3.2b

1. Contact applicant for additional documents or to inform of adding to SEDC agenda.
2. Placed on SEDC agenda and applicant is encouraged to attend board meeting.
3. After board meeting SEDC will inform applicant of approval, denial, or request for more documentation. (if not present).
  - a. If denied applicant has the right to reapply.
  - b. If more documentation needed applicant will be placed on the following agenda.
4. If approved SEDC will draft Performance Agreement and send to applicant for review.
5. Once approved by applicant SEDC will prepare for final signatures.
6. Once Performance Agreement is signed, project is prepared for funding.
  - a. Project commences.
  - b. Project completed.
  - c. Invoices and proof of payments or receipts provided to SEDC.
  - d. SEDC provides payment within 7 days.
7. On the anniversary date of Performance Agreement, a meeting is conducted with business based on Performance Agreement.

**Letter of Approval from Property Owner**

This letter is to serve as permission for the tenant listed below to apply and participate in the \_\_\_\_\_ Facade Grant \_\_\_\_\_ program with the Sonora Economic Development Corporation. I \_\_\_\_\_, certify that I am the legal owner of the property and the tenant currently holds a lease for the property.

I acknowledge the improvements to be made to the property described herein:

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I acknowledge the improvements shall be maintained by the tenant according to the approved project and will adhere to all applicable city, state, and federal codes.

Property owner (Signature): \_\_\_\_\_

Property address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Tenant name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business name: \_\_\_\_\_

Current lease valid through: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Initials \_\_\_\_\_

**Letter of Permit Request**

This letter is to certify that \_\_\_\_\_ has met with City of Sonora, Code Enforcement Officer for review of the following project for SEDC grant funding:

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The City of Sonora, Code Enforcement Officer certifies that the following permits are required for project approval:

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or

☐ NO PERMITS REQUIRED

Inspection #1 date: \_\_\_\_\_ Code Enforcement Officer Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Inspection #2 or Final date: \_\_\_\_\_ Code Enforcement Officer Initials \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
City of Sonora, Code Enforcement Officer

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: that all projects requiring a permit must have a final inspection before funding.**

Applicant Initials \_\_\_\_\_