

Minutes
Core Area Advisory Board
Business Assistance Subcommittee
Tuesday April 23, 2024
Council Chambers, 710 NW Wall Street Bend, OR
Noon- 2pm PST



CITY OF BEND

Noon Core Area Advisory Board (CAAB) Business Assistance Subcommittee Meeting

Roll Call:

- Alyssa Heim
- Jeff Baker
- Alayne Fardella
- John Heylin
- Sara Odendahl, Bend Chamber of Commerce

1. Conflicts of Interest Disclosures

- **Alyssa Heim**-Owner of Big Story Book Store on Greenwood and 3rd, in the BCD. Potential conflict of interest.
- **Jeff Baker**-Craft3. No conflicts.
- **Alayne Fardella**-No conflicts.
- **John Heylin**- Owner of Unofficial logging company which is in the Core area. Potential conflict of interest.
- **Sara Odendahl**- Bend Chamber of Commerce. No conflicts.
- **Janet Llerandi Gonzalez**: Consultant for the Spanish speaking outreach for local businesses

2. Goals for Today (5 minutes) – Allison Platt

- Provide overview of existing Business Assistance program
- Identify areas for improvement for future Business Assistance Program funding cycles including:
 - Program Policy
 - Design & construction Assistance!
 - Scoring Criteria
 - Review process.
 - Timeframe for scoring

- Provide staff and the full CAAB with direction for program recommendations for the May 16 CAAB meeting.

3. Business Assistance Program Overview (10 minutes) – Allison Platt

[Presentation Slides](#)

In 2023 six of seven businesses that applied were awarded funding. BURA reallocated some of the funds from one application to support funds for two of the childcare operator applicants.

Grants that were actually awarded ranged between \$7,250 and \$24,500 and requests ranged from \$10K to the max of \$50K. Total project costs ranged from \$14K to \$400K.

Currently we have executed grant agreements with two of the six businesses:

- Dogwood Cocktail cabin
- Growing Tree Childrens Center.

Draft Agreements out for signature:

- Colima Market
- Timber Kiddies

Working with Marcos (1631 NE 2nd Street) on refining his construction costs and then his grant agreement will be executed.

Open Space has taken a step back to reevaluate their project due to some changes on their design team. They have one year before their money is put back into the grant program for a different cycle.

Staff provided an overview of the existing program policy, next steps and schedule for revising the program policy.

4. Survey Input & Areas for Improvement (15 minutes) – Allison Platt

Staff presented on survey feedback on program from CAAB members that participated in scoring last year as well as one applicant that did a survey.

Janet, the consultant who worked with Latinx businesses shared her suggestions:

- Owner authorization creates language barrier breakdown. Janet suggested shared outreach with both building/property owner and tenant present at the same time, so that there's a shared understanding of what is being applied for.

- Clarification between the Design assistance portion and the full Design assistance, tenants were not sure which to apply for.
- More lead time for business owners to provide estimates from contractors.
- Continue communication and outreach, there is no established program or section of the city where there is a dedicated bi-lingual bicultural person to conduct outreach for Spanish speaking community.
- A survey-not the best way to communicate. Have this feedback session in person.

Marcos (applicant that was awarded a project):

- Did not know anything about the program until Janet approached him. She went through the entire process and explained it to him.
- Janet assisted him with all the documentation as his English is limited.

Discussion with Marcos & Janet:

The barrier for the Latino community is not being able to fully understand the program, how it would affect their business and benefit their business. Another barrier is many assistance programs during COVID were not available for non-citizens so many don't believe that they are eligible for any funding programs.

Some applicants would like to see more money and less match out of pocket.

One applicant did not understand the match money, when that money was going to be due or if there was a payment schedule available. The suggestion made; there needs to be more clarity on when the money is due, is there a payment schedule or does the money have to be in all at once?

It was suggested to use culturally appropriate outreach, hold meetings in restaurant familiar to the Latino community, providing food versus opening up council chambers or the library. You will get more Latino people in attendance.

Add a checkbox to the owner authorization form that shows the owner has seen the design and agrees to it and the improvements proposed.

5. Public Input (15 minutes)

No public comment.

6. Program Recommendations Open Discussion (75 minutes)

The committee had a robust discussion on improvements to the program which are summarized below:

Application Improvements:

- Staff to come back with a plan to support applicants with application assistance and ensure cultural competency is considered particularly for Latino community
 - Look into assistance with SCORE & SBDC
 - Shared outreach with tenants & owners
- Enhance owner authorization form
- Clarity on ADA/accessibility project requirements
- Communication with applicants once application has been received/send them a final version of their application as a receipt
- Clarify how Grant funds will be used for different portions of a project.
- Create project budget template for applicants to use

Program Policy Improvements

- Establish a minimum grant funding award between \$5,000-\$7,500 acknowledging staff time that goes into supporting and processing each grant agreement & invoicing.
- Remove design assistance track but ensure design/concept development are still eligible projects
- Clarify if a business owner identifies accessibility improvements and they are being funded with public assistance they will need to address accessibility component first, due to ADA law and risk. Make sure this is clear in policy and application.
- Clarity on how match will be calculated, when it is due, etc.
- Identify a max grant amount that any one applicant or phase of a project from same applicant can receive
- Update scoring criteria to reflect Council goals/priorities

Scoring:

- Better definition of catalytic- to encourage return on investment thinking. What is our limited early money/investment actually doing? What do we want it to be focused on?
 - The committee had a lot of discussion about how to re-define and re-focus catalytic in scoring criteria specifically around whether a business should have the flexibility to identify either internal or external needs to support their business success or whether we should be using early limited funds to support external/visible projects.

- General consensus was to score projects higher if they have a visible component but ensure that any business need (internal or external) would still be eligible for the program.
- Subcommittee also discussed the need for better direction from BURA on focus between catalytic/visible/return on investment improvements vs. childcare. The subcommittee discussed writing a cover letter to BURA with proposed changes that explain CAAB's rationale for focusing limited early TIF funds on projects that help catalyze the area.
- Subcommittee agreed to remove scoring criteria for demonstrated financial need since it is hard to objectively measure financial need.
- Consensus to also evaluate removal of how soon investments can be made scoring criteria since the direction is to remove the design assistance track. Instead discussed having a base request, asking are you committed to doing this project (even if it is just the design phase) within the next 18 months?

Review process:

- Review proposed projects for code compliance. Recommend pulling in city staff to review applications, create summary of what is needed for applicant.
- Have subcommittee review applications in first round before full CAAB consideration so there are two meetings to review apps.

Homework: Consider max amount any one business or project can take advantage of program within a given time period from program.

- Max amount of times applicant can apply within a certain time period (up to 2x)
- ensure dollars are being used for a different phase of a project or for a different project
- Max amount over a 5 year period?

Adjourned: 2:04pm

To view a recording of this meeting click the link below:

[April 23, 2024](#)