



# Downtown Mobile Signage Improvement Grant Program

## DESCRIPTION OF PURPOSE AND PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

### A. Purpose

The purpose of the Signage Improvement Grant Program (the “sign grant”) is to provide grants for signage and sign-related lighting improvements to storefront level businesses in Downtown Mobile. It is intended that such improvements will enhance the Downtown Mobile business environment through better education of customers and visitors as well as enhanced aesthetic values to the streetscape. All applicants and proposed projects must meet the terms, conditions, and other requirements set forth herein to be eligible for a sign grant. The Signage Improvement Grant Program is being administered by the Downtown Mobile Alliance (the “DMA”) and all questions should be directed to Maggie Shreve at (251)459-8701 or via email at [mshreve@downtownmobile.org](mailto:mshreve@downtownmobile.org).

The DMA is looking for projects that will have a significant aesthetic impact on the Downtown Mobile retail environment. DMA reserves the right to reject any application in its sole discretion. DMA also reserves the right to recommend funding at a lesser amount than that requested.

### B. Program Priorities

Sign Program grants will be awarded based on the quality and design of the sign.

### C. Program Qualifications and Boundaries

Sign grants are available to ground-level businesses and non-profits only. The business must be located in downtown Mobile within the Henry Aaron Loop and a member in good standing with the Downtown Mobile Alliance. Priority will be given to DMA member retail businesses located within the Downtown Mobile BID.

### D. Time Frame

Sign grant applications will be taken on a first-come-first-served basis. Each grant will have a restricted time-line for start and completion of the signage installation.

Once a project is awarded a Sign Grant, the applicant has three (3) months to begin construction work on the project. If construction work does not begin within the 3-month period, the applicant will be notified that the grant will lapse, and the funds will be returned to the fund pool.

Once construction work has started on an approved project, the applicant has six (6) months to complete the project. If these milestones are not completed at the end of the 6-month period, the applicant will be notified that the grant has lapsed, and the funds will be returned to the fund pool.

**E. Preferred Retail Categories**

Preference will be given to those businesses that provide under-served products to the growing Downtown Mobile residential, office, and visitor population and are listed in the City of Mobile’s “New Plan for Old Mobile.”

These include: Apparel, Accessories, Home Furnishings and Home Accessories, Specialty Retail and Gift Stores, Electronics, Health and Personal Care, and Used Merchandise Stores.

**F. Eligible Improvements**

Eligible improvements include: prepping and painting, exterior lighting, signage restoration/rehabilitation, signage replacement, architectural/design fees, other signage related façade improvements deemed consistent with the intent of the Sign Grant Program.

**G. Maximum Grant Amount**

Maximum reimbursement will be 50% of eligible costs incurred by application, with a maximum amount of \$2000.

**H. Applicant Release of Funds**

Subject to the terms and conditions contained herein, sign grants will be paid by the DMA to the applicant upon: (i) completion of the approved project in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted to the DMA; (ii) submittal of proof of payment of all expenses included as part of the sign grant as approved, and (iii) submittal of a vendor lien release form from the sign manufacturer and/or installer

**I. Disclaimer**

Neither the DMA, nor its affiliates, shall be responsible for design or construction of improvements to property that is owned or leased by the applicant. No warranties or guarantees are expressed or implied by the description of, application for, or participation in the sign grant. The applicant is advised to consult with licensed architects, engineers, or building contractors before proceeding with final plans or construction.

**J. Application Process**

- Pre-Submittal Conference – A meeting with an assigned staff member of the DMA must be held prior to submission of a sign grant application.
- Submittal of Application – Grants will not be awarded to projects that are under construction or completed at the time of application submittal. The application, together with all required documentation, should be delivered to:

Downtown Mobile Alliance  
261 Dauphin Street  
Mobile, AL 36602  
Attention: Maggie Shreve  
Or [mshreve@downtownmobile.org](mailto:mshreve@downtownmobile.org)

- Design Review Process – All applicants pursuing incentives must have their projects reviewed by the DMA staff and Incentives Committee. The DMA review process may hold the project to a higher standard than that of the Architectural Review Board (“ARB”). The DMA review process will assess the project for design quality and for architectural, historical, and contextual compatibility to ensure that the DMA’s funds are being invested in a quality project that produces lasting benefits for the community.
- Incentive Committee Review and Approval –The applicant’s proposal will be reviewed by the DMA Incentives Committee.
- Grant Award – Begin construction. If during the process, changes to the approved sign are desired, the new design must be reviewed and approved in advance by the DMA Incentives Committee. Any changes not approved in writing will jeopardize the grant award. There is no guarantee that the redesign will be approved.

**K. Application Requirements**

1. Completed application form including applicant business owner and landowner information. Contractors are not eligible applicants.
2. Applications must include the following materials, if applicable, for consideration. Please provide materials that can be reproduced for distribution to the DMA Incentives Committee.
  - a. Current photo of the building’s exterior (including all sides)
  - b. Professional rendering of proposed signage
  - c. Architectural plans, including dimensions/measurements
  - d. Color and materials samples
  - e. Sign plans
  - f. Awning design (if part of the signage)
  - g. Letter from the property owner authorizing the proposed repairs
3. Estimated costs and timing. Please provide copies of vendor bids/estimates or other documentation of cost estimates for all proposed Signage work. Also include the estimated days or months needed for completing of the project.
4. Completed, signed, and dated application, which states the name, address, email address and telephone numbers of the business owner.