

Romeo Downtown Development Authority

DDA SIGN Grant Program

The DDA offer s a grant program for eligible improvements for business signage for commercial property located in the DDA District. This is a matching grant program with applicants potentially receiving up to 50 percent of the cost of eligible signage improvements. Funds are available for this program on a first come, first served basis. In 2016 – 2017, the Romeo DDA allocated \$1,500.00 for improvements. The SIGN Grant Program provides partial reimbursement for eligible signage improvements for current buildings and new construction, to property owners and new or expanding downtown business tenants.

A maximum reimbursement of \$500.00 per business may be paid by the DDA. This ceiling will be reviewed annually and may be adjusted according to funds available for the SIGN Grant Program.

All SIGN design plans shall be reviewed and approved by the DDA. Any new or proposed SIGNAGE may be subject to approval by the Village of Romeo and the applicant is responsible for obtaining such approval.

The intent of the SIGN Grant Program is to strengthen the economic viability of downtown Romeo by providing financial incentives for improving the exterior of existing buildings and constructing new commercial buildings. The SIGN Grant Program provides an opportunity to preserve the architectural heritage and enhance the unique atmosphere of downtown historic Romeo. The best approach to encouraging compatible downtown building SIGN design is through preservation of a building's original architectural features whenever possible. The SIGN Grant Program promotes this intent by focusing on this reimbursement program as a primary business recruitment and retention tool and applying the DDA CBD Model Design Guidelines for Signage, which are based on the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation of historic resources. The Village of Romeo is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and on the State Register of Sites with a Michigan Historical Marker.

DDA SIGN Grant Program Guidelines

The minimum project cost for the SIGN Grant Program eligibility is \$100. The maximum reimbursement amount per project is \$500. Funds for the SIGN Grant Program may be allocated each budget year by the DDA as funding permits. The budgeted amount will be determined after allocating sufficient revenue to capital outlays, DDA operations, and other budget line items. The SIGN Grant Program will only be operable if funds are available.

If a commercial building under one ownership is a multi-tenant building, each separate unit with an individual storefront façade and an independent ground floor entry shall be eligible to receive SIGN Grant Program funds. However, SIGN Grant Program funds shall not exceed \$500 per unit, per application.

Applicants receive disbursement of SIGN Grant funds after completion of the project, approval of work by a final Village inspection (if necessary), and submittal of copies of paid invoices for approved expenses to the DDA Coordinator.

Eligible Applicants

Owners and/or business tenants of structures located within the Romeo Downtown Development Authority Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district may apply for the SIGN Grant Program funds.

Priority will be given to new or expanding retail businesses.

Eligible Buildings

Any existing or proposed commercial building located within the DDA District, which is owned or leased by an eligible applicant, is eligible for SIGN Grant Program funds. Because the SIGN Grant Program is a business recruitment and retention tool, new building construction and building additions – for new or expanding businesses – will be given priority.

Projects approved for SIGN Grant funds must comply with all applicable Village of Romeo codes and ordinances. Projects may require a building permit and may require site plan approval by the Village of Romeo.

Eligible Improvements

Materials, labor, architectural, engineering and design services for signage creation/installation improvements.

Ineligible Expenses

Tasks not specifically stated as eligible expenses are:

- 1. Interior improvements;**
- 2. Loan fees, mortgage/land contract refinance;**
- 3. Appraiser, attorney, interior decorator or designer fees;**
- 4. Village of Romeo site plan, building or sign permit fees;**
- 5. Expenses incurred prior to DDA approval;**
- 6. Any expenses paid in goods or services;**
- 7. Wages to applicant or relatives in record of consanguinity, unless licensed to do such work.**

Timetable

Approved applicants shall be subject to all SIGN Grant Program Guidelines and all amendments thereto. The commencement and completion dates will be “best guess” estimates that are mutually acceptable to the applicant and DDA. In the event that actual SIGN construction on a project has not commenced within 60 days of the DDA funding commitment date, or if a project has not been completed and has not been granted Certificate of Completion within one year (365 days) of the DDA funding commitment date, the DDA will evaluate the status of that project. At its discretion, the DDA reserves the right to cancel the commitment.

Other Program Guidelines

- 1. Within a 5 year period, a property address may not apply for SIGN Grant funds more than twice for the same store unit unless a change in business ownership occurs;**
- 2. The total amount awarded to a property and/or tenant for the same store unit address, during a 5 year period may not exceed \$1,000.**
- 3. Whenever the property ownership changes, the new owner is eligible for SIGN Grant Program funds. When a change of ownership occurs, the DDA may consider factors such as prior improvements and further eligibility shall be at the sole discretion of the DDA Board and/or SIGN Design Committee. A new 5 year timetable and \$1,000 maximum would apply to the new owner without concern for the application of guidelines to the former owner, and provided all other SIGN Grant Program guidelines are adhered to;**
- 4. Whenever the business tenant changes, a new business tenant becomes eligible for SIGN Grant Program funds. A new 5 year timetable and a maximum of \$1,000 would apply to the new tenant without concern for the application of guidelines on the previous tenant and provided all other SIGN Grant Program guidelines are adhered to;**

5. At the DDA's discretion, an exception to any SIGN Grant Program guidelines may be granted in the event of special conditions or situations;
6. All SIGN Grant Program projects are subject to the audit by the Village of Romeo;
7. All SIGN Grant projects must adhere to the DDA CBD Model Design Guidelines for Signage.

Application

1. Contact the Romeo DDA for SIGN Grant Program guidelines and application;
2. Submit completed application with appropriate attachments to the DDA Office;
3. Review proposed signage designs with the Romeo DDA Sign Design Committee at a designated meeting;
4. The DDA approves application if applicant follows appropriate recommendations and when funds are available.

Submission

Submit the following to the DDA Office (228 North Main, Suite H, Romeo, MI 48065):

1. Completed application;
2. As appropriate for type of project: five (5) copies of signed Sign plans, building elevation, site plans, product drawings, specifications and installations details as required by the DDA Sign Design Committee or DDA Board;
3. Official cost estimates from contractors, vendors or architects.

For consideration at DDA Sign Design Committee meetings, the deadline for submittal of SIGN Grant Program applications will all required information, is the first of each month.

Review/Approval

1. The DDA Sign Design Committee reviews the application. Applications shall be on file for review by the DDA Board. The DDA Sign Design Committee decides to support the project, ask for modifications of the project, or rejects the project based on the criteria established in the Romeo DDA CBD Model Design Guidelines of Signage or based on recommendations of experts;
2. Applicant may be required to attend a Sign Design Committee meeting to make a presentation and review the application with the Committee;
3. Project details that necessitate a permit or an appearance before the Village's Planning Commission are finalized by providing such approval to the DDA Coordinator. Modifications to the plan or approved application must be referred back to the DDA Sign Design Committee;
4. Construction may begin upon DDA Board approval and acquisition of required Village permits;
5. During construction, the DDA Coordinator must authorize any changes to the approved scope of work or the DDA may rescind the funding commitment.

A DDA decision will be rendered on or before the third Wednesday of the month.

Payment Procedure

1. Applicants receive SIGN Grant Program disbursement after project completion, approval of final village inspection (if required), and submittal of copies of paid invoices for approved work to DDA Coordinator;
2. The DDA Coordinator reviews submitted invoices and prepares a DDA check request. The DDA check request is submitted by the DDA Coordinator to the Romeo DDA Board for review and payment;
3. DDA Coordinator mails the check to the applicant or notifies the applicant when the check is ready for pick up.



Direct any questions to:

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