

**TITLE 6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**PART 10: COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**CHAPTER 1**

**MISSISSIPPI SMALL MUNICIPALITIES**

**& LIMITED POPULATION COUNTIES**

**2018**

**GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION**

**GUIDELINES & IMPLEMENTATION**

**MANUAL**



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## **SMALL MUNICIPALITIES AND LIMITED POPULATION COUNTIES GRANT PROGRAM**

The Mississippi Small Municipalities and Limited Population Counties Grant Program (SMLPC), administered by the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA), is designed for making grants to small municipalities and limited population counties or natural gas districts ("Local Sponsors") to finance projects to promote economic growth in the State of Mississippi ("State"). Funding for grants to Local Sponsors is derived from appropriations or funds otherwise made available by the State Legislature.

The Small Municipalities and Limited Population Counties Grant Program is authorized under Section 57-1-18 et seq., MS Code, Annotated.

## **Eligibility**

### Eligible Applicants

A small municipality, limited population county, or gas district must submit an application to MDA:

- Small Municipality - means a municipality in the State of Mississippi with a population of ten thousand (10,000) or less according to the most recent federal decennial census at the time the application is submitted. The term “small municipality” also includes a municipal historical hamlet as defined in Section 17-27-5 of the Mississippi Code of 1972.
- Limited Population County - means a county in the State of Mississippi with a population of thirty thousand (30,000) or less according to the most recent federal decennial census at the time the application is submitted.
- Natural Gas Districts - means districts created by law and meeting the same requirements as small municipalities.
- Census Designated Place (CDP’s) on the official list are not eligible.

### Eligible Projects

The mission of MDA is “To foster a strong state economy and vibrant communities through innovation, use of talent and resources to improve our citizens’ lives.”

The intent of the program is to stimulate growth and economic development in small communities throughout the State. The selection process will provide priority consideration to those applications that directly relate to the agency mission of fostering a strong economy and vibrant communities. MDA will prioritize applications that promote private sector permanent, non-construction job creation and/or retention and promote private sector capital investment.

Eligible projects must be publicly owned and adhere to program selection priorities.

- Priority #1: Economic Development Improvements- Projects that lead to growth of the state and local economy through private capital investment, new and improved jobs, and trade for Mississippi made products and services. Examples: Industrial Park improvements, spec buildings, etc.
- Priority #2: Community Development Improvements- Projects that improve public infrastructure to indirectly benefit business and industry location and expansion in the local community. Examples: Main Street Infrastructure such as water, sewer, roads and sidewalks, Tourism assets, etc.

- Priority #3: Public Improvements- Projects that improve public infrastructure that enhance the quality of life for the local community. Examples: General water, sewer and road improvements.

## **General Provisions**

The maximum grant amount which may be awarded to any one Local Sponsor will be \$150,000.

Each application will be evaluated on its own merit to meet the intent of the program. All projects must be related to MDA Eligible Priorities.

Communities with a population of 3,500 or less will be required to have a minimum 10% match. Communities with a population greater than 3,500 will be required to have a minimum 20% match. This may be in the form of a loan, cash, or in-kind services. Documented project related soft costs such as administrative, engineering, architectural, inspection, legal, etc. are acceptable forms of matching funds.

SMLPC funds may not be used for working capital, general expenditures, which would normally be covered under a local sponsor's general operation budget, ad valorem taxes, or for project related soft costs such as administrative, engineering, architectural, inspection, legal, etc.

If a community has any open SMLPC grants, they are not eligible to submit another application. An acceptable close-out package must be submitted before an application is considered.

### Mississippi Employment Protection Act

All grant recipients entering into contracts with the Mississippi Development Authority represents and warrants that it will ensure compliance with the Mississippi Employment Protection Act and will register and participate in the status verification system of all newly hired employees. The term "employee" as used herein means any person that is hired to perform work within the State of Mississippi. As used herein, "status verification system" means the illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996 that is operated by the United States Department of Homeland Security, also known as the E-Verify Program or any other successor electronic verification system replacing the E-Verify Program. The grantee agrees to maintain such compliance and, upon request of the State, to provide copy of each such verification to the State. The grantee further represents and warrants that any person assigned to perform services hereunder meet the employment eligibility requirements of all migration laws of the State of Mississippi. The grantee understands and agrees that any breach of these warranties may subject the grantee to the following: (a) termination of this Agreement and ineligibility for any state or public contract in Mississippi for up to three (3) years, with notice of such cancellation/termination being made public, or (b) the loss of any license, permit, certification or other document granted to the grantee by an agency, department or governmental entity for the right to do business in Mississippi for up to one (1) year, or (c) or both. In the event of such cancellation/termination, the grantee would also be liable for any additional costs incurred by the State due to contract cancellation or loss of license or permit.

## **Application Process**

To apply for the Small Municipalities and Limited Population Counties Grant Program, a completed application that is submitted by an eligible applicant must include:

- A detailed description of the project and narrative explaining how the specific improvements relate to the priority. Also include the following:
- Current employment levels at the project site and estimated increase, if any, as a result of the project
- A description of the Local Sponsor's investment in the project, and all public or private sources of funding that have been secured and that will be utilized exclusively for the project
- Need Documentation (pictures, company commitment letters, letters of support from citizens, etc.)
- Legislative Support Letters
- Cost Estimate: Cost estimate must be submitted by an engineer or architect on their letterhead as a signed and stamped original
- Timeline for implementation and completion of project
- Budget Sheet
- Executed copy of the Local Sponsor's resolution of authorization to apply for grant funds
- Executed copy of the Local Sponsor's resolution committing matching funds to the project
- Documentation of Additional Funds (All matching funds must be committed and in place with documentation at time of application)
- E-Verification for the recipient

The Applicant must submit one original of the application to MDA. Complete applications must be submitted in a legal sized, dark blue classification folder with bottom tabbed dividers in between each attachment. All documentation should have original signatures.

2018 Applications will be due by August 31st, 2018 by 4:00 pm, MDA time.

Applications can be mailed to:

Mississippi Small Municipalities and Limited Population Counties Grant Program

Mississippi Development Authority

Community Services Division

Post Office Box 849

Jackson, MS 39205

MDA will evaluate the application to determine if the project meets program criteria. Any application that does not contain information sufficient for review will not be considered for funding.

## **Award Process**

Upon being awarded a SMLPC grant, a binding contract will be executed between the Mississippi Development Authority and the recipient for the specific amount awarded and for the particular activity selected by the applicant.

Construction may not begin prior to an effective grant award date. Any expenses incurred before the effective date of the grant agreement will not be reimbursed by MDA.

All funded projects are required to enter the construction phase within 12 months of the award date. Where construction has not begun within 12 months, the applicant must satisfactorily demonstrate why the project should be kept open or the award may automatically be voided.

## **Procurement**

All contracts and purchases must be made in accordance with normal bid and purchase laws of a municipality or county.

### Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises

The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) encourages the maximum opportunity for increased participation by local Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MBE/WBE) in the procurement of goods and services. The Mississippi Development Authority Minority Business Division at [www.mmbr.org](http://www.mmbr.org) and the Mississippi Procurement Technical Center at [www.mspsc.com](http://www.mspsc.com) can assist with MBE/WBE outreach efforts.

## **Disbursement of Funds**

SMLPC is a competitive program. All funds awarded must be spent for improvements within the scope of the original project description as stated in the grant application. Additionally, all funds will flow through the local sponsor or gas district.

MDA will release SMLPC program funds for services rendered, on a reimbursement basis, for approved eligible costs incurred for the project.

Recipients will have two (2) years from the date of the grant agreement to request reimbursement for SMLPC funds. Failure to implement and complete the project within that time frame may result in the agreement being voided and funds de-obligated.

## Requests for Cash

SMLPC funds are requested on a reimbursement basis by using the Request for Cash and Consolidated Support Sheet. These forms can be found at [www.mississippi.org/csd](http://www.mississippi.org/csd) in the Forms Library as a single excel file titled "Request for Cash." The Request for Cash form provides the necessary information about the recipient, project and budget, along with the required signatures to authorize the request. The Consolidated Support Sheet allows for all the reported costs to be documented along with the amount of funds expended and remaining. The costs reported must be equal to the amount requested and disbursed including any matching funds. Signatures on both forms are required in order to process the request. In addition, adequate invoices and other certified documentation must be submitted with these forms and prior to approval of disbursement of funds.

An Authorized Signatory Letter must be sent prior to or no later than with the first Request for Cash and at any time there is a change in administration. The Authorized Signatory Letter will advise CSD of the authorized signatories for the SMLPC project.

Completed Requests for Cash must be submitted to:

The Mississippi Development Authority  
Community Services Division  
Post Office Box 849  
Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0849

All forms submitted must be accurately completed or the request cannot be processed and will be returned to the recipient. Forms submitted with errors will delay the process and greatly impact the turnaround time for funds being released because all information must be verified and approved for payment prior to submission to the Department of Finance and Administration. According to State Statute, 45 days is allowed for the processing of cash requests. If after the 45<sup>th</sup> day payment has not been received, please contact the Program Manager to check on the status of your request.

Requests for Cash overlapping the State's fiscal year (June 30<sup>th</sup>) or the sub-recipient's fiscal year must be separated into two separate requests.

All requests for construction expenses must include an itemized invoice approved by the engineer/architect.

Matching funds must be expended and documented at a proportionate rate with SMLPC Funds unless approved by MDA.

## Contract Modifications

The Community Services Division requires all SMLPC grant recipients to receive approval prior to making contract amendments, modifications or extensions. SMLPC grant recipients must submit correspondence and documentation associated with the request, signed under the original signature of the chief elected official or appointed executive officer, supporting the need for the change(s) or extension.

NOTE: CSD must approve any changes to the original budget prior to local action. Failure to have approval may result in an ineligible activity which may result in the repayment of grant funds to MDA.

No approved applicant will be allowed to use excess funds to pay for the project costs not accounted for in the original project description. Additionally, if the recipients complete their project for less than the amount awarded, the excess funds can be requested for additional project work as long as there is no change from the scope of the original project.

## **Monitoring**

Funds provided under the SMLPC are subject to audit by the Mississippi State Auditor's office. Additionally, MDA will also monitor all projects to ensure compliance with the original application submitted.

During the life of the project or at project completion, a CSD program manager will contact the grant recipient to determine a date for the monitoring visit.

## **Close-Out Process**

Close-Out Packages bearing the original signatures of the designated signatory officials are due to MDA within 30 days after completion of the project or 60 days from the termination date of the contract.

The close-out process encompasses a series of activities to verify that SMLPC funds have been properly spent and that the local sponsor has completed the elements of its project in a timely and acceptable manner.

The grant recipient must submit all financial, performance, and other reports required as a condition of the grant.

The tasks involved in closing out a grant include:

1. Resolution of all monitoring findings;
2. Submission of close-out report (one original copy); and

### 3. Submission of Certificate of Completion (two original signed copies)

The close-out process should begin when the following criteria have been met or will be met shortly.

1. All costs to be paid with program funds have been paid, including any unsettled third- party claims.
2. The recipient has fulfilled all of its responsibilities under the Funding Agreement. This includes injection of all local cash and in-kind services, other State and/or Federal funding, all private investment, and job creation/retention (where applicable).

Delays in completing close-out can result in the denial of future requests with MDA.

All monitoring findings must be resolved before the close-out can be finalized.

## **File Maintenance**

Maintaining an efficient filing system is critical to the administration and monitoring of your project. A successful monitoring experience hinges on the quality with which the local sponsor maintains its filing system and the ease of obtaining information from those files.

When establishing a file system, local sponsor should consider using two categories to set up their files, grant files, and project files. The grant files should contain documentation and information that relate to the overall funding and administration of your project. The project files should contain specific documentation and information pertaining to the SMLPC project and should be maintained for a minimum of five (5) years from grant closeout or for the period required as specified by governing regulations.

## **Program Contacts**

MDA Community Development Bureau

601.359.5756

601.359.2859

These guidelines may be amended by MDA at any time. MDA, at its discretion, may temporarily waive any requirement of the guidelines to the extent that the result of such waiver is to promote the public purpose of the Act and is not prohibited by State Law.