

TOWN OF GROTON

ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FUND INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

A. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1. Description: The Economic Assistance Fund is a publicly-funded program consisting of a one-time financial assistance reimbursement for public infrastructure improvements or business development expenses associated with business opening, relocation or expansion in the Town of Groton.
2. Intent: The Town of Groton seeks to support businesses which are opening in, expanding within or relocating to the Town by assisting with costs related to business development or infrastructure. The intent of the fund is to facilitate the development and expansion of businesses that will stimulate the local economy by creating and/or retaining jobs, increasing tradable sectors of the economy and/or supplying goods or services that meet a specific community need. To this end, the town has established a fund for construction of necessary public infrastructure improvements and some pre-development costs associated with business development and expansion. The following guidelines are not intended to detail absolute requirements, but instead to help facilitate the selection of the best use of program funding.

B. PROGRAM GUIDELINES

1. General: The applicant must be the beneficiary of the proposed infrastructure improvement and is responsible for installation or implementation. The company needing the assistance must be the applicant and funds are not to be used to support speculative ventures. The Town of Groton reserves the right to reject all applications and/or request additional documentation from the applicant. Submission of completed application is no guarantee of award. All awards are subject to the availability of funds.
2. Eligibility: If the applicant is an existing business operation, the business must be legally licensed and registered with no local, state or Federal tax bills outstanding.
3. Maximum Amount Awarded: The total award may not exceed two years' worth of anticipated local tax revenues (whole parcel post-improvement) as determined by the Town's Tax Assessor. No more than 50 percent of the overall project costs will be awarded.
4. Timeframe: Decisions on all applications will be rendered within 60 days of application submission. Funds will be disbursed within 30 days following the final inspection and verification of the improvement completion by the building inspector. If the application is approved, project construction must be completed within two (2) years from the date of Town Council approval or said approval becomes null and void unless a written extension is requested and approved by the Town Council.
5. Reimbursement: Funds are to be dispersed only on a reimbursement basis and the town reserves the right to request and receive any and all documents required to verify the expenditure. Copies of invoice documentation for the expense are required.
6. Preferred Candidate Businesses: The program is intended for businesses which will have a positive impact on local economic conditions, targeting the following:
 - a. Small businesses as established in the current Table of Small Business Size Standards published by the U.S. Small Business Administration, generally defined as 500 or fewer employees, but variable by industry

- b. Businesses expanding or locating in Groton's key commercial growth areas and in areas of existing infrastructure or planned capital investments, as follows:
 - i. Route 1/Downtown Commercial District
 - ii. Route 117/Center Groton
 - iii. Route 117/Flanders Road Industrial Areas
 - iv. Route 12/Route 184/I-95 Interchange area
 - v. Thames Street Waterfront District
- c. Businesses creating jobs or relocating employees to Groton
- d. Other priorities as established by the Town Council including, but not limited to, special municipal economic development investments with anticipated financial payback over time

C. ELIGIBLE COSTS

1. Pre-Development: Related to preliminary planning/engineering, environmental assessment, environmental cleanup/remediation, demolition, and/or market data research and analysis prior to deciding to locate and/or expand in Groton. A maximum of \$5,000 will be awarded per project, with reimbursement subject to the obtaining of a Certificate of Occupancy within one year of application.
2. Public Infrastructure: Defined as components of physical facilities which are a component of a shared system that provides a public service, the following are examples of allowable public infrastructure improvements.
 - a. Water and sewer line extensions including upgrades to the property or building exterior
 - b. Gas, electric and communication line extensions including upgrades to the property or building
 - c. Public sidewalks
 - d. Road improvements including driveway connections to adjacent parcels
 - e. Installation of traffic control devices including curb cuts
 - f. Street lighting and other streetscape improvements
 - g. Storm water system improvements
 - h. Utility upgrades including underground installation
3. Innovation: Defined as costs related to Research & Development (R&D) or other pursuit or advancement of innovative practices or technologies.
4. Excluded/Prohibited Costs: The following improvements are not eligible for reimbursement through this fund:
 - a. Signage
 - b. Window replacement
 - c. Landscaping
 - d. Decorative streetscaping/façade improvement
 - e. Permit fees
 - f. Interior improvements

D. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

1. General: The application for reimbursement through the Economic Assistance Fund shall be approved prior to the start of construction on the project. The applicant shall bear all costs related to project permitting and construction.

2. Pre-Application Meeting: A pre-application meeting is mandatory prior to submitting an application. To schedule a pre-application meeting, contact Paige Bronk, Economic and Community Development Manager, Office of Planning and Development Services (OPDS), (860)448-4094, pbronk@groton-ct.gov.
3. Application Form: A digital copy of the Economic Assistance Fund application can be downloaded from the Town of Groton Economic Development website at the following link: <https://www.exploremoregroton.com/economic-assistance-fund>; the form can be completed digitally, but must be printed and signed prior to submission. Alternatively, a paper copy of the application can be obtained from the Office of Planning and Development Services (OPDS).

E. SUBMISSION & REVIEW PROCESS

The completed application must be submitted to the Economic Development Division and will be referred to the Town's Economic Development Commission Subcommittee for review and recommendation before being forwarded to the Town Manager. Finally, the application will be placed on the Town Council Agenda for consideration. Administrative approval may be granted by the Director of Planning and Development for requests meeting the program requirements under \$10,000.

F. CRITERIA FOR AWARD

1. Prerequisites: To be eligible for reimbursement, a project must meet all of the following criteria.
 - a. The project must increase the local tax base.
 - b. The project must create and/or retain jobs within the Town of Groton.
 - c. The project must conform to current zoning regulations and most recent Plan of Conservation and Development.
2. Evaluation: In addition to the above prerequisites, the project will be evaluated based on the following criteria. Applications meeting at least three of the following criteria will be given the highest consideration for approval.
 - a. The applicant is a small business enterprise.
 - b. The project is located in one of the town's targeted development areas.
 - c. Five or more full-time equivalent jobs are expected to be created or relocated to Groton within three (3) years of project completion.
 - d. One or more nearby parcels will be made development-ready through the project.
 - e. A portion of the project costs will be covered by other public funding sources or incentives.
 - f. The value of the requested funds is no more than 50 percent of total project costs.

For further information on these funds and/or the Town of Groton, contact Jon Reiner, Director of Planning and Development, (860)446-5980, jreiner@groton-ct.gov or Paige Bronk, Economic and Community Development Manager, (860)448-4094, pbronk@groton-ct.gov.

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