

Center City Development Corporation

Board Meeting

To: Center City Development Corporation (CCDC)
From: DMC Staff
Date: September 11, 2024
RE: Good Neighbor Grant Request – 492 Vance Ave (Griggs Building)

The Good Neighbor Grant application has been submitted for consideration at the September 18, 2024 CCDC Board Meeting.

Project: **Griggs Building Exterior Renovation**

Applicant: Stephanie Wade
492 Vance Ave.
Memphis, TN 38126

Property Owner: J S Real Estate LLC
492 Vance Ave.
Memphis, TN 38126

Applicant’s Request: Good Neighbor Grant in an amount up to \$25,000.

Project Description: The subject property is a historic two-story building on the North side of Vance Avenue originally built in 1858. From 1949 to 1974, the building housed the Griggs Business and Practical Arts College, one of the few Black colleges in Memphis. The College educated more than 1,000 Black men and women before closing its doors in 1974.

Since the school’s closure, the building has struggled to find a new user, and has fallen into a state of disrepair as a result. The applicant purchased the property in 2021, with the intention of restoring the historic structure and converting it into a productive space once again, providing educational resources and community engagement opportunities. Since acquiring the property, the applicant has worked diligently to increase awareness of the site’s history, hosting tours for interested community members and successfully lobbying the National Parks Service to place it on the National Register of Historic Places.

As part of this restoration project, the applicant is looking to make significant improvements to the exterior of the property. The exterior scope of work includes the following:

- Restoration of historic signage
- Landscaping
- Concrete repair
- Exterior lighting

EIG Budget:

The Good Neighbor Grant program is designed to help Downtown-adjacent businesses make high-quality exterior building improvements to improve the appearance of property and fight blight. These improvements help draw in customers by making buildings approachable, increase pedestrian activity in neighborhoods, and add vibrancy to once dilapidated property. The Grant is reimbursable and requires the applicant to provide receipts of completed work.

For this program, we partner with neighborhood organizations that provide connections, invaluable insight, and funding. For this location in South City, our partner is the City of Memphis Housing and Community Development and their Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

The following describes the estimated project budget:

Sources:

Owner’s Equity	\$ 5,000	(11%)
Tennessee Historic Development Grant	\$ 15,000	(33%)
GNG Request	\$ 25,000	(56%)
Total Sources	\$ 45,000	(100%)

Uses:

Historic Sign Restoration	\$ 27,680	(62%)
Landscaping	\$ 1,320	(3%)
Demo and pour new stairs	\$ 15,000	(33%)
Contingency	\$ 1,000	(2%)
Total Uses	\$ 45,000	(100%)

Design Review:

The applicant will submit design plans to the DRB in the coming months.

EBO Program:

Any project that is awarded financial incentives from the Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC) shall include a best faith effort to reach no less than 25% participation by minority and/or women owned businesses (MWBE) in the project's development cost (design and construction hard costs).

Compliance with this Equal Business Opportunity (EBO) Program is a closing requirement. **If the requirements of the EBO Program are not met, the CCDC will cancel the incentive.**

Outreach & Inclusion Plan: The specific steps required for each applicant to be compliant with the DMC's EBO Program takes into consideration the size, scope of work, and development costs associated with the project. At the time of incentive application, it is typically too early to identify specific contractors or sub-contractors that will ultimately be involved in the construction. However, the applicant has a clear understanding of the EBO Program and has worked with DMC staff to identify the following key steps that will be included in their Outreach & Inclusion Plan:

- The applicant will meet and coordinate with minority-owned business assistance organizations such as the Memphis Area Minority Contractors Association (MAMCA) and the Mid-South Minority Business Council Continuum (MMBC) to make their members aware of the project and any contracting and sub-contracting opportunities.
- The applicant will use the City of Memphis Business Diversity & Compliance Registry and the resources at the Shelby County Office of Equal Opportunity Compliance to identify qualified subcontractors and other tradespeople to perform the needed work.
- The applicant will advertise and host a pre-bid conference to allow MWBE subcontractors an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about the job opportunity. DMC staff will be invited to attend the pre-bid conference to observe.
- The applicant will contact a minimum of 3 certified MWBE businesses for each trade or type of subcontractor needed, and provide each a fair opportunity to submit a bid and be considered for the work.
- Once the service providers have been identified, the applicant will submit the form titled "Proposed Utilization Plan" to DMC staff for review and approval. The applicant will also be asked to provide a full record of the outreach steps taken and the results thus far. This documentation can

include items such as a phone call log, copies of emails, meeting notes, and pre-bid conference attendance sheet.

- After construction has started, the applicant will provide updates to DMC staff detailing the project status and level of MWBE involvement at each major phase of the project.

Minimum MWBE Goal: With an estimated exterior budget of \$45,000, a 25% level of MWBE inclusion for that work is approximately **\$11,250.**

Staff Evaluation: DMC staff supports this grant application to improve the exterior appearance of this historic structure in the South City neighborhood. A core goal of the Good Neighbor Grant is to restore the character of important places within the community, and staff believes that the proposed exterior renovations will elevate this crucial piece of Memphis' educational history.

The building is highly visible from both Vance Avenue and Danny Thomas Boulevard, two important connectors between Downtown and the South City neighborhood. The proposed exterior renovations will transform this blighted structure into a neighborhood amenity, increasing the attractiveness of the surrounding area and encouraging more investment.

Recommendation: **Staff recommends approval of a Good Neighbor Grant in an amount up to \$25,000 based on approved receipts and subject to all standard closing requirements and conditions.**