

# Center City Development Corporation Board Meeting

To: Center City Development Corporation (CCDC)  
From: DMC Staff  
Date: October 14, 2020  
RE: Exterior Improvement Grant Request, 119 S. Main St., Suite 100

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The enclosed Exterior Improvement Grant application has been submitted for consideration at the October 21, 2020, CCDC Board Meeting.

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**Project: Blind Bear, 119 S. Main St., Suite 100**

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Applicant: Jeannette Comans  
Blind Bear  
119 S. Main St., Suite 100  
Memphis, TN 38103

Applicant's Request: Exterior Improvement Grant in an amount up to \$18,173.50.

Project Description: The subject property, Blind Bear, is located on the west side of South Main Street, in the block between Gayoso and Peabody Place (between the Center for Southern Folklore and Muse Inspired Fashion). The now full-service restaurant is a woman-owned business and has operated on Main St. since 2011.

Blind Bear currently has an uncovered patio along the Main Street Mall that can seat up to 20 people (following COVID restriction guidelines). The patio is fenced, however, it is extremely weather dependent and inconsistent due to the absence of a roof, fans, heaters or panels.

The applicant plans to use the EIG grant to install a high-quality awning to cover the existing patio. The awning will be treated as a permanent improvement and is rated for a 10-year minimum useful life. Electrical work will also be completed to allow the use of heaters in the winter months.

Construction is planned to begin following DRB approval.

EIG Budget: The Exterior Improvement Grant (EIG) is designed to help Downtown commercial property owners and businesses make high-quality exterior improvements. A secondary goal

of the grant is to help new and existing businesses succeed by enhancing their curb appeal in ways that might not be possible without assistance. The Exterior Improvement Grant is for exterior work only and requires minimum leverage of 1 to 1. The maximum grant for this location is \$100,000.

The following budget describes the EIG scope:

<b><u>Sources:</u></b>		
Owner’s match	\$18,173.50	(50%)
CCDC EIG	\$18,173.50	(50%)
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$36,347.00</b>	<b>(100%)</b>
<b><u>Uses:</u></b>		
Awning to cover patio	\$21,867	(60%)
Electrical & outdoor heaters	\$14,480	(40%)
<b>Total Uses</b>	<b>\$36,347</b>	<b>(100%)</b>

Design Review: The applicant will submit design plans to the DRB immediately.

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. 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 use the City of Memphis Business Diversity & Compliance Registry and the resources at the Shelby County Office of Equal Opportunity Compliance to identify qualified vendors and tradespeople to perform the needed work.

- The applicant will strive to identify and contact 3 certified MWBE businesses for each trade or type of subcontractor needed, if available, and provide each a fair opportunity to submit a bid and be considered for the work.
- Once the available 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 similar materials.
- After construction has started, the applicant will provide monthly 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 EIG budget of \$36,347 a 25% level of MWBE inclusion for that work is approximately **\$9,087.**

Staff Evaluation: Our Downtown businesses are no strangers to the devastation and hardships that the COVID-19 Pandemic continues to generate. As local bars and restaurants begin to re-open in Downtown Memphis, many business owners are altering their operations to accommodate the hesitations and safety concerns of their customers. One major, impactful nationwide shift is the expansion of outdoor dining availability.

DMC Staff is passionate about supporting local businesses and is ready to welcome Memphians back to downtown, following CDC guidelines. It is staff’s opinion that applications for patio improvements are consistent with the purpose and intent of the EIG program, especially during this time of crisis where innovation and flexibility are necessary. The proposed improvements to Blind Bear’s patio are consistent with other covered outdoor dining restaurants along the Main St. Mall: Majestic Grill, Aldo’s Pizza, Local and S.A.G.E.

Approving this EIG request will support a long-standing women-owned restaurant in their efforts to provide safety and consistent outdoor dining options to their customers.

**Recommendation:**

**Staff recommends approval of an Exterior Improvement Grant in an amount up to \$18,173.50, based on approved receipts and subject to all standard closing requirements and conditions.**