

City of San Antonio



Minutes Economic and Workforce Development Committee

2021 – 2023 Council Members

Chair: Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8
Mario Bravo, District 1 | Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3
Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4 | Teri Castillo, Dist. 5

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

2:00 PM

City Hall Complex

The Economic and Workforce Development Committee convened a regular meeting in the Norma S. Rodriguez Council Chamber in the Municipal Plaza Building beginning at 2:13 PM. Deputy City Clerk Aurora Perkins took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

Members Present: Manny Pelaez, *Chair*
Mario Bravo, *Member*
Phyllis Viagran, *Member*
Teri Castillo, *Member*

Members Absent: Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, *Member*

Approval of Minutes

1. **Approval of the minutes from the Economic and Workforce Development Committee meeting on February 3, 2023.**

Councilmember Bravo moved to Approve. Councilmember Castillo seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Pelaez, Bravo, Viagran, Castillo
Absent: Rocha Garcia

Public Comments

Briefing and Possible Action on the following items

2. **Briefing on the Ready to Work program and related workforce development initiatives.**
[Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager; Michael Ramsey, Executive Director, Workforce Development]

Michael Ramsey, Executive Director of the Workforce Development Office, provided a progress update on the Ready to Work (RtW) Program to include program participant success stories. He noted that there were 2,783 eligible participants in the Program with 1,436 enrolled in approved training programs. He noted that 200 participants had completed the Program with over 20 placed in positions. He stated that the RtW Program was a community priority and spoke to community partners and City departments that assisted in communications and education of the Program to the community.

Ramsey provided an update to eligibility requirements which did not require participants to be enrolled in college programs. He introduced the new tagline of “Ready to Work! Learn. Earn. Succeed.” He reviewed the demographics of participants by council district and in regard to other factors to include gender, ethnicity/race, income and age. He also noted the sector categories which participants were being trained in to include healthcare, IT/Cybersecurity, transportation/logistics and education.

Ramsey noted that staff would be releasing a digital training catalog for community disbursement. He reviewed Community of Practice sessions which would include four sessions reviewing all pipeline process areas by contracted vendors Jobs for the Future (JFF) and Up Partnership. He noted that the contractors would review all pillars of engagement and ongoing initiatives.

Ramsey spoke to pilot program specifics to include allowing eligibility for military service connected individuals within Bexar County and another that developed a RtW Paid Internship Program.

Councilmember Viagran asked to meet off-line to discuss efforts to engage single mothers into the Program. She spoke to digital inclusion concerns and how to increase the number of participants that may not have access to digital connections. She stated that she was pleased with the transportation/logistic training program and educating residents of training options.

Councilmember Bravo stated that he was pleased to see participant pipeline data and partnership with area community colleges. He stated that more communications were needed with workforce organizations to build communications of the Program.

Councilmember Castillo stated that she was pleased with communication of training programs and numbers already eligible for the Program. She asked if staff was working with probation offices to communicate training programs with individuals who had been previously incarcerated. Ramsey confirmed that there were current efforts to share communications with probation offices.

Chair Pelaez noted that there were opportunities to educate residents of programs prior to the probation office stage being at the pre-trial level. He noted that he would provide contact information for follow up by staff. He expressed his support of the RtW Program.

No action was required for Item 2.

3. Briefing on the Small Business Noise Mitigation Grant Program. [Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager; Brenda Hicks-Sorensen, Director, Economic Development]

Ana Bradshaw, Assistant Director of the Economic Development Department (EDD), provided an

update on the Noise Ordinance Task Force which reviewed impacts of the Ordinance. She stated that a Sounds Music Impact Program which scope was set to address capital gap to assist small businesses with mitigation measures. She stated that the pilot grant program would be administered by EDD and would award up to 75% of consulting fees, equipment and or renovations up to a maximum grant of \$7,500. Bradshaw stated that awardees would be encouraged to hire a consultant to assist with modifications and improvements to sound systems and operations.

Bradshaw reviewed the timeline for the delivery of approximately 20 grants. She also reviewed scoring criteria for the grant awards.

Councilmember Bravo expressed his support of the pilot program and noted that it would have a positive cooperative effort within the community. He noted that sound improvements could provide to more expensive renovations than anticipated and recommended that higher amounts be awarded to a lesser number of participants and asked that grants be increased to \$15,000 rather than \$7,500. He noted that sound expert evaluations be required for all grant applicants.

Councilmember Castillo stated that she wanted to make sure that there were at least two opportunities for grant awards for each council district. She asked for clarification on scoring criteria and age of businesses and barriers they might face.

Councilmember Viagran agreed that a minimum of two establishments per council district were awarded rather than having higher grant awards. She stressed the importance of identifying entertainment districts and education of the Noise Ordinance requirements.

Councilmember Bravo asked if a dee jay was considered a performer. He stated that he did not support points awarded for the presence of an outdoor entertainment area.

Chair Pelaez stated that some loud music was low megahertz bass which was not measured the way decibels were measured. He noted that bass travelled omnidirectionally.

4. Briefing on the Façade Improvement Program and Outdoor Spaces Program funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF).
[Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager; Brenda Hicks-Sorensen, Director, Economic Development]

Economic Development Assistant Director Ana Bradshaw provided an overview of the Facade Improvements and Outdoor Spaces Program funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and local recovery Funds. She provided background of each program and spoke to new components of the programs. Bradshaw stated that the Facade Improvement Program would target geographically priority areas with grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000 and reviewed eligibility requirements and costs under the Program. She stressed that equity scores would be used in the distribution of grant funds based on need and gaps to capital funding.

Bradshaw reviewed the Outdoor Spaces Program criteria and noted that grants would range from \$2,000 to \$10,000 and would be administered within EDD. She spoke to project eligibility requirements and equity score criteria. Bradshaw spoke to projected outcomes which focused

around strengthened connection between people and the places they share. She reviewed the fiscal impact of the Program and the timeline for the program process and awards.

Councilmember Viagran stated that it was important to engage community stakeholders during the communication phase of the Program roll-out.

Councilmember Bravo expressed his support of the programs.

Councilmember Castillo thanked the team for their work on the Item and expressed her support of the programs and inclusion of non-profit organizations for possible funding opportunities.

Chair Pelaez expressed concern that many facade improvements could be covered by existing business insurance policies and wanted to make sure that certain improvements be covered by those means. He stated that it was important to stress the need for insurance for these businesses once improvements were made. Bradshaw stated that staff would work with the City Attorney's Office to discuss requirements for insurance and communications. Assistant City Manager Alex Lopez stated that the application process would be modified to address insurance requirements and education.

No action was required for Item 4.

5. Briefing on a Second-Stage Company grant program and a Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer matching grant program. [Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager; Brenda Hicks-Sorensen, Director, Economic Development]

Sarah Woeppel with the Economic Development Department provided an overview of the Economic Development Incentive Fund (EDIF) and Second-Stage Company grant program and a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) matching grant program. She reviewed the criteria for the Second Stage Company Grant Program to include the purposes of grant funding not to exceed \$50,000 per grant and spoke to the company commitments after being awarded funding.

Woeppel spoke to the requirements under the Growth Strategy Program to include written growth plans and minimum requirements. She reviewed the minimum qualifications for the grant, the application process and evaluation criteria for the grant awards.

Woeppel stated that staff was assisting businesses in submitting for competitive Federal grants under the SBIR/ STTR programs. She stated that these grants had strong local economy impacts and reviewed the application and award process. She noted that to date, 41 local companies had been awarded Federal grants and she spoke to the matching SBIR/STTR grant company profiles and matching grant criteria for all phases of possible awards.

Woeppel reviewed the timeline for the application process to include review and consideration by City Council tentatively in September 2023.

Councilmember Viagran asked if companies under the Second Stage Program would be required

to provide input on possible investments and grant requests. Woepfel provided clarification of the requirements to be submitted in grant requests. Councilmember Viagran stressed that it was important to communicate the updates to the City's website in communicating the Program application process.

Councilmember Castillo asked for clarification on marketing and community efforts for the application process. Woepfel provided clarification of communications and delivery of marketing messaging.

Chair Pelaez asked for clarification on export services requirement of applicants. Economic Development Director Brenda Hicks Sorenson provided clarification of eligible businesses which did not include restaurants and other service industry businesses and provided an example of manufacturing services or export industry sector eligible businesses. She stressed that community workshops would communicate eligibility requirements.

No action was required for Item 5.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 3:39 PM.

Approved

Manny Pelaez, Chair

Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk