



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 3

Agenda Date: February 28, 2023

In Control: Economic and Workforce Development Committee Meeting

DEPARTMENT: Economic Development Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Brenda Hicks-Sorensen

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Briefing on the Small Business Noise Mitigation Grant Program.

SUMMARY:

This briefing will provide an overview of the proposed small business noise mitigation grant pilot program that seeks to reduce nuisance noise disturbances for neighbors of food, beverage, and entertainment businesses.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In March 2021, a Council Consideration Request called for the creation of a Noise Ordinance Task Force to make recommendations for revisions to the City's code. Through the Noise Ordinance Task Force, Development Services Department undertook a pilot study from October 2021 to April 2022 to track noise complaints and better understand the impact of nuisance noise.

This pilot study found that although residential offenders made up the majority of violations during

the 6-month period, most repeat offenders were commercial locations. Citations did not appear to be an effective deterrent for repeat offenders in commercial areas. Additionally, outdoor stages and entertainment areas with amplified sound were noted as frequent sources of nuisance noise.

To provide assistance to small businesses seeking to mitigate the impacts of nuisance noise, the City Council provided \$150,000 within FY 2023 General Fund to the Economic Development Department (EDD) to develop a noise mitigation grant program.

ISSUE:

EDD is implementing a noise mitigation grant program that encourages and assists small businesses in voluntary compliance with current and future noise ordinances. This program emphasizes the need for community-minded measures in addition to traditional enforcement mechanisms.

The program would assist food and beverage establishments purchase soundproofing materials, equipment, and renovations, and hire a consultant to provide tailored recommendations to grant awardees. The grant award would be limited to 75% of applicable quoted expenses and equipment up to a maximum of \$7,500.

A list of potential items that could be purchased by grant awardees includes, but is not limited to:

- Sound absorbing panels and curtains
- Acoustic doors and windows
- Acoustic foam
- Bass traps
- Mass loaded vinyl
- Enclosing outdoor entertainment areas
- Directional speakers
- Decibel meters

The program encourages, but does not require, business owners to work with a qualified sound consultant to identify measures that could mitigate noise. The grant application would also require a narrative that demonstrates that noise mitigation is a primary goal, and the quoted equipment or renovations must be directly related to, and useful for that goal. However, by providing guidelines for purchases instead of limits, businesses will be able to purchase the equipment that meets their individual needs and budget.

The application process is anticipated to begin in March, with grant funds disbursed to awardees in summer 2023. This pilot program will be available citywide, but will prioritize funding for applicants based on gross receipts in 2022, proximity to residential properties, presence of outdoor entertainment areas, hosting live performers with amplified sound, and equity atlas score.

The program's effectiveness will be assessed in the months following grant disbursement utilizing noise complaints and violation data.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on favorable feedback from the Economic and Workforce Development Committee, staff recommends proceeding with implementation of the Small Business Noise Mitigation program.