

## Howell Main Street/DDA Sign Incentive Program

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) developed a Sign Incentive Program to improve the quality and appearance of signs throughout the DDA district and to promote the use of the Design Guidelines for downtown.



### **Objectives:**

This program seeks to bridge the gap in cost between unattractive signage and highly functional, attractive signs that complement Downtown's historic buildings and create a more attractive Central Business District. The intent of the program is to support three-dimensional, symbolic, projecting signs. Replacement signs of similar construction and quality, or duplications of existing signs with minimal changes, may not qualify for the incentive.

The Incentive Program provides a grant of 25% of the total cost of an approved sign, up to a maximum of \$1,000 per applicant. Up to \$5,000 in incentives will be given each fiscal year on a first-come, first-served basis. Sign incentive awards must be approved by the Design Committee of Howell Main Street and DDA **before** a sign is installed.

Any business located within the Howell Main Street and/or Downtown Development Authority District may apply for an incentive.

Sign incentives are granted at the discretion of the Design Committee. In order to receive a sign incentive, the applicant must submit a sign design that meets the DDA's Design Guidelines, the City's Sign Ordinance and the program objectives. The Design Committee and the City's Zoning/Building official will review all signs that are seeking an incentive.

Any sign that is non-conforming or legal non-conforming must be brought into conformance with the current sign ordinance and any zoning ordinances that apply.

Because awnings were historically important design elements in traditional storefronts, awning signs will be considered for a Sign Incentive award. To be considered for an award, awning signs must meet the Design Guidelines for downtown.

Window lettering and/or graphics will be considered for a Sign Incentive award when proposed in conjunction with another type of eligible sign; in this case the entire proposed sign project is awarded a Sign Incentive.

### **The Sign Incentive Process:**

1. Pick up and review the following items available on the third Floor of City Hall:
  - a. Sign Incentive Program application
  - b. City of Howell Sign Permit Application
  - c. DDA Design Guidelines
2. Complete the applications and submit to the City of Howell Community Development Department on the third floor of City Hall.
3. The DDA staff and the City's Zoning/Building official will review the sign permit application and incentive application for conformance to the City's Sign Ordinance and Zoning Ordinance. If the applicant has filed an application for the Sign Incentive Program, the City of Howell Sign Permit may not be approved until the Design Committee has reviewed the application and proposed design.
4. Design Committee will review the sign application and proposed design. Applications will be reviewed on the appropriateness and compatibility of the sign design to the Design Guidelines, sign size, sign color, sign placement on the building/site, relationship to adjacent properties and program objectives as noted above. (4 weeks)

5. If the sign design is deemed to substantially meet Design Guidelines and fulfill the program objectives, the Design Committee will issue a letter to the applicant confirming approval and will determine an incentive grant amount.
6. If the sign design is deemed inappropriate or incompatible with the Design Guidelines and program objectives, the Design Committee will table the application and will provide a letter to the applicant suggesting changes to the design. If the applicant submits a new sign design based upon Design committee recommendations, the application will be reviewed a second time.
7. The applicant must submit a work order or invoice from their sign company indicating the total cost of the sign before an incentive check may be issued. Once the City receives the invoice, grants a sign permit, and conducts a final sign inspection/approval; a check in the amount of the approved incentive will be mailed to the applicant. (It may take up to 30 days for the incentive check to be issued after the final sign inspection.)

**Incentive Program Requirements:**

1. Applicants leasing their space must provide a letter providing permission from the building owner to apply for the incentive. The letter must indicate an awareness of the rules and requirements of the program.
2. Applicants receiving incentives must have a sign design that conforms with the City of Howell Design Guidelines. A high value will be placed on creative signs, particularly three dimensional, symbolic, projecting signs.
3. Signs incentives will not be given to internally lit panel signs or standard corporate franchise signs.
4. Only one incentive will be granted to an applicant each City/DDA fiscal year (July 1 to June 31). Priority will be given to applicants who have not yet received an incentive.
5. Applicants will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis.
6. The Design Committee may deny a sign incentive to any applicant that does not make recommended changes to their sign design after a first review. Every effort will be made to work with applicants so that an incentive can be granted. Once the Design Committee denies an application, the applicant will be required to wait one fiscal year to re-apply for an incentive.
7. Non-conforming signs will be considered for a sign incentive, provided that the applicant agrees to bring the sign into compliance with the City sign ordinance.
8. The Design Committee will examine total cost of any proposed sign to ensure that the sign incentive is being used appropriately.
9. All incentive checks will be written to and mailed to applicants. A work order or invoice from a sign company is required to confirm the total cost of the sign.



# Howell Main Street/DDA Sign Incentive Program Application



Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Proposed Sign Installation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I am the \_\_\_\_\_ building owner \_\_\_\_\_ business owner

Contact Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

## Sign Company Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Contact \_\_\_\_\_

## Sign Costs

Estimated Total Cost of Sign: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Materials \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Design \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Installation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Enclosure Check List

- \_\_\_\_\_ Sign Incentive Program Application
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sign Permit Application from City of Howell
- \_\_\_\_\_ Written permission from building owner (if applicant is leasing)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sign design, drawn to scale, including dimensions and colors

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Date Received:			
Date Reviewed:	Approved	Tabled	Denied
Letter Issued:	Yes	No	
Incentive was	Approved	Denied	
Incentive Amount:	\$ _____		