



## **SIGN GRANT PROGRAM**

### **Background**

Community Improvement of Algoma Main Street Program has developed a sign grant program for the downtown businesses that will offer a matching grant up to \$300.00. Equally as significant, the program will assist and support the efforts to design and install signs that are appropriate and effective for the respective business, while at the same time adding to the character of the downtown as a whole.

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### **Purpose**

The downtown buildings are characterized, not only by their individually unique facades, but also by what initially identifies to the passer-by the businesses they contain, that being the sign. Thus, virtually every business is reliant on signs in some way, shape or form to draw attention to that business. Proper shape, form, placement and legibility become key factors to a sign's functional effectiveness.

There are many points to consider in the development of a sign. For example;

- The sign should compliment the image of the business, the downtown, and the building it adorns.
- The sign should not overpower or detract from neighboring businesses, but rather, hang in harmony.

The purpose of the sign grant, therefore, is to encourage quality signage through careful consideration of all that a sign represents. The Algoma Main Street Design Committee will provide this input based on the design guidelines that have been established. Final approval for sign projects receiving grant money will be given by the Main Street Design Committee and Program Manager.

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### **Characteristics of an Effective Sign**

Excessive size, expense or illumination, do not necessarily constitute an effective sign. Rather, the following characteristics should be applied:

- Legibility – Signs should be readable with simple lettering style.
  - Clarity – The message should be clear and simple so the reader can easily absorb it.
  - Placement – The sign should be placed where it is easily seen and in direct relationship with the storefront it identifies.
  - Attraction – Elements of the sign should catch the eye and hold it long enough to get the message across.
  - Durability – Quality material and construction of a sign will ensure easy maintenance and convey a positive image.
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### **Eligibility**

All proposed signage projects need the approval of the Algoma Main Street Design Committee to be eligible for a grant. The Design Committee will use the design guidelines published in this document along with the guidelines from the National Trust for Historic Preservation publications; *Signs for Main Street* and *Keeping Up Appearances*. Any deviation from the approved design application will warrant disqualification.

Signs ordered and/or installed from September 1, \_\_\_\_ to October 31, \_\_\_\_ may apply for a grant. As of February 1, 2001, all applications must receive approval from the Design Committee.

Eligible expenditures for the sign grant program include:

- Exterior Signs
- Window Signs
- Awning and Canopy Signage
- Labor (construction & installation)
- Design Assistance

Ineligible projects will include, but are not limited to:

- Interior Store Signs
- Roof Top Signs (also prohibited within the Algoma Sign Ordinance)
- Off-Premise Signs (billboards)

Available funds will be limited to seven (7) \$300.00 matching grants or a maximum of \$2,100.00 annually. Applications will be evaluated on a first come first serve basis.

The Algoma Main Street Design Committee will not, for whatever reason, refuse a grant application based on age, race, sex, religion, or any other discriminatory act.

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**Community Improvement of Algoma  
Main Street Program  
Signage Design Guidelines**

Signs will have an easy to read and direct message.

Signs will be the appropriate size and scale to the building.

Signs will be located in a logical place on the building.

Signs will reflect the quality of services and merchandise found within the business.

Signs must conform to all requirements spelled out in the Algoma Sign Ordinance and any other guidelines referenced within this text.

A flush, wall mounted signboard, will conform in dimensions to the Algoma Sign Ordinance requirement of one square foot per lineal foot of building facade. The sign should be mounted in the most fitting location between the top of the storefront display windows and the bottom of the second floor windowsills. Generally, lettering should occupy no more than 65% of the signboard.

Protruding signs may be used if deemed appropriate in relation to adjacent signage. A maximum of 24 square feet of surface area (calculated on one side) is allowed for a protruding sign. Requirements for extents into and above the public right-of-way will follow the City Sign Ordinance.

Window signs will not obscure the display area and will be limited to 25% of the total window area. The color of the lettering should contrast with the display background. Effective examples would be, light colored letters or gold leafed letters with dark borders. Generally, lettering should be no smaller than 3 inches.

Awnings or canopies that are utilized for signage may use contrasting letters painted or sewn onto the fascia only.

Generally, backlighted transparent awnings with signage will not be accepted. Depending on the architectural style however, they may be permitted.

Generally, plastic backlighted signage will not be accepted unless the applicant can show how its use would be appropriate in that particular situation.

Clear and simple lettering styles best suit the objective of an easily read sign.

Letters can be painted or mounted directly on a signboard, storefront or wall. Various letter styles and materials are available from sign manufacturers.

Contrast between sign elements enhances a signs readability. The human eye most easily interprets a dark background with light lettering; however, the opposite can also be effective. Subtle contrasts, although desirable in some cases, may be harder for the viewer to see.

Illuminated signs can be appropriate in the downtown if their scale is proportional to the storefront and within the guidelines above. Painted signs can be directly illuminated with fluorescent and incandescent lights. Internally lit signs are most effective with lettering on a dark opaque background. Neon lettering may also be used as an effective style in the right proportions.

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### **Approval Procedure**

The “Sign Grant Application Form” initiates the procedure. The Program Manager will assist and monitor the procedure from that point on.

The grant proposal must be reviewed and approved by the Design Committee.

Upon approval, a certificate of approval will be issued to the applicant.

The Design Committee must give approval for any changes.

Approved changes will be documented and attached to the original application, which will be signed and dated by the Program manager.

The applicant will be reimbursed the percentage due upon proof of payment in full to the contracted company and/or individual.

The applicant and Main Street Manager will conduct a final inspection before the grant payment is made to the applicant.

Deviation from the approved plan may result in the disqualification of the applicant from the grant program.

**Application forms and additional guidelines referenced in this text are available at the Main Street office at 308 Steele Street. For further information or clarification contact Michael Glime (920) 487-5498.**

**Community Improvement of Algoma  
Main Street Program  
SIGN GRANT APPLICATION**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Name and address of applying business: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name of applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Will you be using the services of a graphic artist or professional sign company? Y / N
4. If you circled yes, who? \_\_\_\_\_  
(Free design assistance is available through the Main Street office. For further information call (920) 487-5498)
5. Estimated cost of the project: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Please provide a cost breakdown by major category (design, materials, labor, etc.)  
Attach additional information if necessary.

ITEM	COST
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Proposed start date: \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Completion date: \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is the current use of the storefront for which the sign is intended?  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Who owns the property on which the sign will be mounted?  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Please attach two copies of the proposed project design and cost estimates.**

12. Affirmations:
- I. The undersigned applicant(s) affirms that:
    - a. The information submitted herein is true and accurate to the best of my (our) knowledge.
    - b. I (we) have read and understand the conditions of the Community Improvement of Algoma Main Street Program's Sign Grant Program and agree to abide by the conditions and guidelines.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant of Agent thereof Program Manager

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant of Agent thereof

