



To: Economic Development Commission

From: Discover Downtown Franklin, Inc., Franklin Chamber of Commerce, and Franklin Development Corporation

Subject: Franklin Entrepreneurial Program

Date: August 1, 2011

Summary

Discover Downtown Franklin (DDF), the Franklin Chamber of Commerce (Chamber), and the Franklin Development Corporation (FDC) are partnering to create and implement a proven entrepreneurial program in Franklin to help recruit and maintain successful small businesses. DDF and the FDC are 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations and the Chamber is a 501(c)6 nonprofit organization. All three organizations are focused on economic development within Franklin. We are requesting the full amount of the expected Economic Development Fee of \$5,633.76 to obtain the resources necessary to create this program.

I. Statement of the Problem

Currently, Franklin does not have an organization or program that guides potential small business owners or assists current small business owners with business expansions. Small businesses make up over half of Franklin's business environment. Small business start-ups are very risky with typically 50% failing within the first 5 years. This is why it is extremely important to provide education and training to these current and potential business owners in order to stabilize and increase our local economy. At this time, potential small business owners simply create a plan, ask for financing from a local bank, and if accepted, open a business. However, the new owner may not have the necessary knowledge to successfully run a business outside the product or service they provide. This scenario unfortunately occurs too often and the business is not able to survive past the first five years. Along with that, successful business owners may take the risk of a business expansion that ultimately leads to the company's demise. Especially during these hard economic times, many of our small businesses are struggling and the owners are looking to improve their companies with no place to turn for help.

II. Proposed Project and Purpose

The purpose of this project is to successfully educate and assist potential new business owners and potential business expansions. Our objective is to establish key relationships, implement first steps, and build a strong foundation for an effective, local, results-driven entrepreneurial development program for Franklin. The FDC, DDF, and the Chamber will be partnering and

working with Amy Beechy, owner and creator of Project Matters, LLC. Ms. Beechy has successfully created and implemented various entrepreneurial programs throughout the state of Indiana including Cass County and Fulton County. She states, “Businesses that participated in SUCCEED [Cass County’s program] reported 83% employee growth, 84% increase in sales, and 360% increase in value of machinery and equipment.”

Ms. Beechy creates different programs based on the needs of each individual town or county. Past programs have included: creating and maintaining a revolving loan fund, an intense business planning class for business start-ups and expansions, a potential business plan competition for class graduates, hosting continuing education workshops/trainings and youth focused activities. Each program consists of phases that breakdown the necessary actions to create and implement a successful program. We believe her services will greatly impact Franklin’s economy, benefiting the entire city and its residents.

III. Evaluation

We will evaluate the program by looking at the resulting impact on the city and the local business environment. We will observe the number of graduates in each class, how many students start a business or conduct a business expansion and the length of time each start-up and expansion endures. We will record the number of jobs created and sales growth along with other aspects of the business or overall industry.

IV. Budget and Additional Funding Sources

If received, the economic development fee would assist with Ms. Beechy’s service fee of \$19,600 for the entire project. Our group will seek additional funding from the Johnson County Community Foundation, the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development Program, sponsorships from local banks, and other sources as needed.