

MICHIGAN PROJECT READY SITES PROGRAM

Program Information

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) has established an exciting new **Project Ready Sites Program** to create an inventory of “premium” sites of 200 acres or more that are available and ready for development. Qualifying sites are awarded the prestigious Project Ready designation. Project Ready sites will play an important role in Michigan economic development by helping companies and communities identify sites that have a complete package of due diligence information in place that demonstrates that they can be developed in an expeditious manner. This advance work will save interested companies making site location decisions approximately six months in investigatory time and thousands of dollars in due diligence studies, making the sites more attractive and better positioned to make the short list. The current competitive environment where speed to market is key makes it essential to have sites that can be readily developed for new projects.

To encourage the development of Project Ready designated sites in Michigan, the MEDC has established a related program, **Project Ready Sites Due Diligences Cost Reimbursement Program**. This program will reimburse up to \$100,000 or 50% (whichever is less) of the due diligence cost for sites receiving the Project Ready Sites designation. This is a competitive program so only those sites best positioned for large scale development will be chosen. \$1.5 million will be available for funding of this program during the 2010 calendar year. In addition, MEDC will also select one Project Ready designated site per year that is in excess of 1,000 acres for consideration of funding of up to \$500,000 or 50% (whichever is less) of the due diligence costs associated with the Project Ready Sites designation. There are two funding rounds for this program and applications are due by either February 1, 2010 or July 1, 2010.

The following documents are available for your reference:

- *Self-Evaluation Checklist of Program Requirements*
- *Project Ready Sites Program Application*
- *Project Ready Sites Due Diligence Cost Reimbursement Program Information*
- *Project Ready Sites Due Diligence Cost Reimbursement Program Application*

What sites qualify for the program?

The Project Ready Sites Program is open to sites containing at least 200 or more vacant, contiguous, developable acres that are generally rectangular in shape and that can demonstrate that they are available and ready for development. The program is targeted at sites planned for industrial, warehouse, or hi-tech type of uses. Sites zoned or planned for residential, retail, or commercial development are not eligible for participation in the program.

Who can apply for the program?

Eligible applicants for the Project Ready Sites Program are limited to political subdivisions, non-profit economic development organizations, industrial development agencies, chambers of commerce, real estate developers, property owners, and other businesses engaged in economic and real estate development.

How do you apply for the program?

The Project Ready Sites Program application form must be completely filled out, with all attachments provided with the initial application. Applications can be submitted anytime during the year. All questions in the application must be answered to the best of your knowledge. If a question is not applicable, mark the appropriate response box as “not applicable”. Due diligence material, as indicated in the application, must be completed and provided. The application also requires plans showing how infrastructure services are in place or can be brought to the site sufficient for the intended use within 180 days. Before submitting an application, please review the self-evaluation checklist of program requirements to insure that you can meet the criteria and that all of the required surveys, tests, studies, and tasks are completed and documented. Any costs incurred by the applicant during the Project Ready process and the preparation of the application are the responsibility of the applicant. Applications and supporting documentation must be submitted in both hardcopy (in a three ring binder, organized with tabs by section) and in electronic format (on a USB flash drive or CD-R, containing program applications and all additional required materials) and sent to:

Lois Malhado, Program Coordinator
Michigan Economic Development Corporation
300 N. Washington Square
Lansing, MI 48913
malhadol@michigan.org

What type of information must be provided with the application?

Although the specifics are detailed in the application, a summary of the information that must be submitted with the Project Ready Program application includes the following:

- Demonstration of community support for the new development
- Confirmation of appropriate zoning for the proposed use
- Community master plan, zoning ordinance and permitting information
- Maps of the site showing location and characteristics including:
 - ALTA/ACSM survey
 - Topographical information
 - Aerial maps
 - Location of infrastructure
 - Plat maps
- ALTA title commitment showing 50-year title search
- Phase I environmental report completed within the past 6 months
- Phase II environmental report if indicated necessary by Phase I
- Other available environmental information on the site
- Geotechnical and seismic information
- Flood plain and wetlands information
- Threatened and endangered species report
- Archeological and historical issue report
- Infrastructure data and commitments from the providers showing present and future services sufficient for the proposed use including water, wastewater, storm water, transportation, electric, natural gas, emergency services and

communication demonstrating availability of capacities necessary for proposed development within 180 days

- Ownership information and demonstration of site control for a minimum of two years with copies of documents provided
- Tax and available incentive information
- Community and employment profile

Is site control required for the program?

Yes, designated sites will be required to be available for sale and under some type of site control for a minimum of two years by the applicant. Copies of the site control documents must be submitted with the application and can include deeds, purchase agreements, or options.

Are there local contacts to assist with information about the extension of utilities at the site?

Yes, economic development representative at DTE Energy, CMS Energy, and Indiana Michigan Power are familiar with the program and will assist in developing plans for the extension of their service to the site if it is within their service area. The contacts are:

- Al Fields, Manager of Economic Development, DTE Energy, email: fieldsal@dteenergy.com, (313) 235-1679
- Al Hooper, Director of Economic Development, CMS Energy, email: achopper@cmsenergy.com, (517) 788-1691
- Barry Visel, Community Relations, Indiana Michigan Power, email: bvisel@aep.com, (269) 279-1543

How are sites evaluated for the designation?

The Project Ready designation will be awarded after the application is reviewed by a selection committee comprised of representatives of MEDC and other state departments, as well as an independent engineering consultant who will verify that the site is project ready. Involvement of state departments upfront will help expedite required permitting. In addition, a Business Process Navigator may be assigned to the site when a potential user is identified to accelerate the development process.

How long does the designation process take?

Unless there are unusual circumstances, the process should not take more that 60 days.

What if I apply for the designation and my site does not qualify, can I re-submit?

The independent engineering company will identify shortfalls with sites that do not qualify. If you can correct these shortfalls, you can re-submit an application for the designation.

How will the site be marketed by the state after receiving the designation?

Sites will then be marketed by the State and the local community as premium Project Ready Sites that are pre-screened and ready for development. In addition to being included on the state's web sites, the state does marketing on a state and national basis and the Project Ready Sites will be prominently advertised. In addition, we suggest that the applicant place a sign on the site to indicate that it has received the designation.

Is there a re-certification process in case there are changes to the site?

Yes, the applicant will be required to notify the MEDC annually of any changes or deviations from the original application. If there have been material changes, the site must be submitted for evaluation for re-certification.

Additional questions? Email Lois Malhado at malhadol@michigan.org