

Memorandum

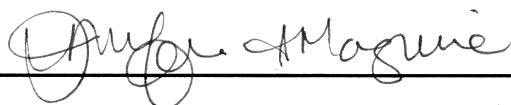
TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Rosalynn Hughey

**SUBJECT: NEW CASP ACCESSIBILITY
COMPLIANCE GRANT PROGRAM**

DATE: February 26, 2020

Approved



Date

2.26.20

INFORMATION

Beginning February 2020, the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement will credit grants of up to \$8,000 to qualifying existing small businesses and non-residential property owners for:

- The cost to hire a private Certified Access Specialist (CASP) inspector/consultant to prepare a CASp inspection report; plus
- City permit and inspection fees relating to corrective accessibility improvements at existing buildings and sites, as identified in the CASp inspection report.

This new program responds to recent state legislation by creating an incentive to assist small businesses to remove barriers that prevent their businesses from being fully accessible or usable by individuals with disabilities.

California Senate Bill 1608, passed in 2008, required each local jurisdiction to have a sufficient number of local building inspectors and no less than one CASp who has been certified by the California Division of State Architect as an expert in disability access requirements. As CASp inspectors conduct plan reviews – for either renovations or new construction – they work to ensure compliance with Title III of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). Their service both helps prevent accessibility violations and ensures that people with disabilities have equal access to public places.

In 2012, California Senate Bill 1186 was passed to expand and fund the training and certification program for City CASp inspectors by charging a \$1 fee on every new and renewed business tax registration. This charge ended on December 31, 2017 but was supplanted by California Assembly Bill 1379 (AB 1379), which made the \$1 fee permanent and furthermore increased it temporarily to \$4 between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2023. During this same period, AB 1379 also allows local building divisions to retain 90 percent of the fee instead of the 70 percent under SB 1608. AB 1379 requires these funds to be used to train and certify local building inspectors to ensure that through the review process, building plans comply with state and federal access requirements. The bill also allows using the fees to fund programs that directly facilitate accessibility compliance by small businesses.

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

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Subject: New CASp Accessibility Compliance Grant Program

Page 2

The Department will allocate up to \$40,000 this fiscal year towards this new grant program, which aims to raise accessibility awareness and compliance among small business owners and non-residential property owners. Funding for the CASp Accessibility Compliance Grant Program will be from the Certified Access Specialist Program budgeted in the General Fund. The program will encourage owners to voluntarily undertake actions to ensure building and site accessibility for all users.

The grants will credit qualifying existing small businesses and non-residential property owners up to a maximum of \$8,000 upon building permit issuance for the cost to hire a private consultant certified CASp inspector to prepare a CASp Inspection Report. The credit will also apply to the cost of City permit and inspection fees to comply with the California Building Code accessibility requirements.

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office and the City Manager's Budget Office.

/s/

ROSALYNN HUGHEY, Director
Planning, Building and Code Enforcement

For additional information, please contact Xuan Ha, Small Business Ally, at (408) 535-8135.