

Worth County Economic Development Authority Investment Assistance Guideline

Introduction

The Worth County Economic Development Authority (Worth County EDA) is dedicated to achieving the highest quality of development, infrastructure, and quality of life for its citizens. Because of the inherent competition between communities for new businesses and jobs, the Worth County EDA recognizes that incentives are sometimes necessary to allow a community to reach its full economic potential. The purpose of this policy is to establish standards and guidelines that will govern the granting of financial incentives to facilitate economic growth. These guidelines are predicated on the belief that the county has an interest in taking positive action to maximize its long-term growth while responding to the needs of both new and existing industries without placing a disproportionate tax burden on its citizens. The decision to grant incentives will be based on a “case by case” review of each applicant’s request.

Economic development has become increasingly competitive in recent years. Therefore, the Worth County Economic Development Authority intends to provide and/or facilitate financial incentives to secure new investments and job creation for the county. These incentives may take many forms including, but not limited to:

- ✓ Worth County is 100% Freeport in ALL Classes
- ✓ Grants or in-kind services made to the company for a specific purpose (i.e., payment of permit fees)
- ✓ Low-interest financing (i.e., State, and local revolving loan funds, tax-exempt revenue bonds)
- ✓ Ad Valorem / property tax exemptions or abatements
- ✓ Waiver of Construction Permit Fees
- ✓ Build-To-Suit / leaseback arrangements.
- ✓ Leasing of temporary office space on the company’s behalf
- ✓ Discounted or Free Land – with a minimum of 4 points, based on our category point system listed below, the project could be eligible for land at no cost. The final agreement is subject to approval by the Worth County Economic Development Board.
- ✓ Rent Concessions or Free Building
- ✓ Tax Credits (offsetting some of the company’s state corporate income tax liability)
- ✓ Employee hiring and training assistance.
- ✓ All State Incentives available

The primary objective of these programs is to provide a financial incentive for the industry to locate or expand its operations in Worth County. It should also be noted that all incentives are offered according to the laws of the State of Georgia.

Minimum Qualification Thresholds

In many communities, incentives awards are “seat of the pants” decisions, made with little understanding of the ultimate return on investment that will result from the community’s initial incentive award. This policy seeks to eliminate “blind subjectivity” by providing formula-based incentives and decision-making parameters to the Worth County EDA and is not necessarily determinative.

It should be noted that this policy is not intended to replace the normal negotiation process that will generally occur when a business is considering opening a facility in Worth County, but to provide a framework for the WORTH COUNTY EDA to use when evaluating the various incentive options available to a potential client. The rubric below is to be used as a general guideline for awarding incentives and is not necessarily determinative.

Category

1. Number of jobs
2. Wages
3. Capital Investment
4. Diversification

1. Number of Jobs:	Points	Weight (30%)
A. 151+ Jobs	3	
B. 76 to 150 Jobs	2	
C. 25 to 75 Jobs	1	

2. Wages (average hourly):	Points	Weight (30%)
A. 20% or more above average wage	3	
B. 10% above average wage	2	
C. 5% above average wage	1	
D. Less than 5% average wage	0	

3. Capital Investment	Points	Weight (30%)
A. \$10,000,000 +	3	
B. \$5,000,000 to \$9,999,999	2	
C. \$2,500,000 to \$4,999,999	1	

4. Diversification	Points	Weight (10%)
A. Manufacturing	3	
B. Warehouse/ Distribution	2	
C. Other	1	

Grading System

- A. 12 points
- B. 8 points
- C. 3 points

Wage Levels

The Worth County EDA requires companies seeking incentives to supply average wage data and supporting documentation. In the case of a completely new facility, such information should include:

- An aggregated average wage (excluding benefits) for ALL employees who will be working in the new facility (including managers and executive-level personnel)
- An aggregated average wage (excluding benefits) for new production (non-managerial) personnel.
- The estimated per-employee value of employee benefits, if applicable
- A projected hiring schedule for all employees

In the case of an expansion of an existing Worth County facility, the company will only be required to provide the above information for the new employees. All the above information will be factored into the incentives award decision.

Key Assumptions

In addition to the above-referenced qualification thresholds, the Worth County EDA incentives policy is based on the following six assumptions.

- 1) The Worth County EDA will not provide cash grants directly to businesses proposing to create jobs in Worth County. The Worth County EDA may, however, elect to purchase, lease, and/or improve the property on behalf of the business.
- 2) Worth County does not generally waive local fees for an economic development project; however, it may pay some or all these fees on behalf of the business based on its evaluation of the project.
- 3) The Worth County Board of Commissioners will not be expected to formally vote to reduce or eliminate ad valorem property taxes for a specific business to assist the Worth County EDA with the location of that business. It should be noted, however, that a comparable arrangement may be structured which would involve the Worth County EDA holding title to the property in question. In these cases, the Board of Commissioners would be advised of the arrangement as a courtesy; however, no formal approval would be necessary on their part.
- 4) Incentives provided by the Worth County EDA to a business pledging to create a certain number of jobs may be subject to “clawback” provisions if the business fails to create the agreed-upon level of jobs.
- 5) Prior to receiving any incentive award facilitated by the Worth County EDA, the benefiting company will be required to formally execute an Incentives Agreement and Project MOU with the Authority. These

agreements will speak to the responsibilities of both parties and what provisions will come into play if such obligations go unmet.

- 6) Incentives provided or facilitated by the Worth County EDA are primarily designed to benefit businesses proposing to create manufacturing, distribution, research, and development, customer care / technical support, or other office or industrial jobs. As a rule, incentives will not be offered to businesses creating jobs in the hospitality or retail sectors; however, the Authority reserves the right to consider such opportunities provided they meet or exceed the capital investment and job creation thresholds.

Revised 4/1/2023.