

Rural Idaho Economic Development Professional Grant Program

Application Guide



ED Professional or Professional – The person hired with Program funds to facilitate Economic Development Projects and to carry out core economic development activities e.g. business attraction, business retention and expansion, business startups etc.

Fiscal Agent – The city, county, or entity designated by the Eligible Applicant to be responsible for requesting, disbursing, tracking and assuring compliance with all Program requirements.

Full-time – Full-time is defined as *at least 30 hours/week*, including the option of job sharing, provided the minimum number of hours have been met.

Private Sector Representative – A person who does not hold elective office but owns, manages or is employed by a business that is not under the direct day to day supervision of a governmental entity.

Program – The Rural Idaho Economic Development Professional Program

Submission

All applications must be submitted through the Department’s online [portal](#). New for this year, applications will need to be submitted with a login and password belonging to the Eligible Applicant. To obtain a login and password or to check to see if your existing login and password will work for this application please contact the Department’s grants team grants@commerce.idaho.gov.

Questions

Please feel free to contact any member of the Business Expansion team with questions regarding the application.

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A frequently asked questions document may be found [here](#).

Match Requirements

Cash participation is needed to maximize the effectiveness of state funds and to develop a financially self-sustainable program. *A cash match equal to 50% of the amount requested is required.* In the long term, as economic gain is achieved, it is expected that additional local funds will reduce the reliance on state funds. Grantees will enter into a grant agreement with Commerce committing to a locally funded cash match. Local matching funds shall be used to provide for the remainder of the ED

Professional's salary and benefit package, training and professional development, office space, telephone, computer, internet access, necessary office equipment, clerical support, travel for marketing opportunities, and for the development of marketing materials

Eligible Applicants

An applicant must be an Idaho county or a group of Idaho counties and cities joining together to submit a single application. Idaho counties with populations in excess of 50,000 may apply, provided that the population of the areas being served does not include any cities with a population exceeding 10,000. Under the auspices of a joint powers arrangement with an eligible County a city may serve as the lead applicant.

Program Specifications

Eligible Applicants are required to form an Economic Development Organization (EDO) to manage the activities of the ED Professional funded through the auspices of the Program. The EDO may be a standalone not for profit corporation registered with the State of Idaho or a committee organized under the auspices of a County Commission or multi government joint powers agreement. A representative from the Department shall be provided advanced notice of all EDO meetings, electronic copies of all meeting minutes and reports and provided with non-voting board or committee member ex-officio status. One-third of the EDO voting board or committee membership must be held by Private Sector Representatives. The board or Committee shall meet at least six (6) times per year and develop a specific plan of work for the ED Professional along with a plan for oversight and evaluation. A Department representative shall be invited to participate in any activities related to the hiring and performance evaluation of the ED Professional.

Application Evaluation

Applications be evaluated and scored on four (4) general areas:

Need (50 Points)

Points will be awarded on a quartile basis. For example, if there are 16 applications (the top four will receive maximum points, the next four 75% of the available points, the next four 50% of the available points and the bottom four 25% of the available points.

- Annual Unemployment (10 Points) – Highest to lowest.
- Median Household Income (10 Points) – Lowest to highest
- Per Capita Income (10 Points) – Lowest to highest
- Poverty Rate (10 Points) Highest to Lowest
- Assessed Valuation (10 Points) – Lowest to Highest

Work Plan (250 Points)

Points will be awarded based on the applicant's approach towards completing core economic development activities. Up to 50 additional bonus points may be awarded to applications containing long term (3-5 year) measurable numerical goals for each of the areas listed.

- Need for Funding Statement (50 Points)
- Business Retention and Expansion (50 Points)
- Business Creation (50 Points)
- Business Attraction (20 Points)
- Potentials & Opportunities (20 Points)
- Other (10 Points)

Capacity (50 Points)

- Tenure (10 Points) – Applicants will receive points for having a tenured Professional (1 point for every year their Professional has worked for the EDO for up to 10 years).
- Certifications (10 Points) – Applicants will receive 10 points if their ED Professional holds a certification through the American Planning Association, the International Economic Development Council, Community Development Council or the National Main Street Center.
- Training (10 points) – Applicants will receive points if their Professional, with in calendar year 2016, attended a conference or trainings offered by the Association of Idaho Cities, Idaho Planning Association, Idaho Economic Development Association, Inland Northwest Partners, International Economic Development Council, American Planning Association, Northwest Community Development Institute or National Main Street Center.
- Memberships (10 Points) – Applicants will receive points if their EDO or Professional is a member in good standing of the Idaho Economic Development Association, Idaho Planning Association, American Planning Association, International Economic Development Council, Inland Northwest Partners or the National Main Street Center.
- Fringe Benefits (10 Points) – Applicants will earn points if they offer their Professional paid vacation, health insurance or paid retirement benefits (pension or matching 401(k) plan).

Sustainability (50 Points)

- Operating Structure (15 Points) – Applicants will receive 15 points if they can document that their EDO is formally organized as a committee under the auspices of a County government, a committee under the auspices of a joint

powers agreement between two or more counties and cities or a non-profit incorporated through the State of Idaho.

- By-Laws (15 Points) – Applicants will receive 150 points for documenting that their by-laws have been revised within the last two calendar years.
- Regionalization (20 Points) – Applicants will receive 20 points if their EDO serves communities located in more than one county.

Award Criteria

The scores assigned to each application is for selecting applicants to participation in the program only and will not necessarily correlate with the amounts awarded. To maximize the reach and effectiveness of the Program each grant award amount will be made on a case by case basis. Factors influencing the award amount will include, the area and number of communities covered by the applicant, past performance in carrying out economic development activities and the strategic alignment with Department initiatives. Applicants should not presume that if accepted into the program, they will receive the amount requested nor an award consistent with past grants. Furthermore, the Department may impose unique special conditions on those applicants whose application responses or past performance history generate concerns regarding their ability to fully execute the Program. Only one grant will be awarded per covered county.