



**IDAHO GEM GRANT
APPLICATION HANDBOOK**

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Introduction

Created by the Idaho Legislature in 2001 under the Rural Initiative, the Idaho Gem Grant Program (IGG) provides assistance to rural communities for the planning and implementation of economic development projects. The program is open to any rural community with a population of 10,000 persons or less.

Job creation and retention are the primary objectives of the IGG program. Grants up to \$50,000 may be awarded to eligible communities for the purpose of developing assets directly connected to private sector job creation. Examples of successful IGG applications include: water and sewer infrastructure for a new business, remediation of slum and blight conditions, blocking business development, and matching funds for the creation of assets with a high certainty of aiding future economic development efforts.

Before preparing your IGG application, call and discuss the competitiveness of your project with the Idaho Department of Commerce Business Development Team. Questions may be directed to:

Jerry Miller, 208-287-0780 jerry.miller@commerce.idaho.gov or
Randy Shroll, 208-287-3168 randy.shroll@commerce.idaho.gov.

Eligible Applicants

Rural Idaho local governments with a population of 10,000 persons, or less, are eligible to apply for up to \$50,000 per project. Communities are no longer required to be a “Gem Community” to access these funds. Cities and counties may apply for grants on behalf of governing districts and non-profit organizations. Through a formal resolution, a city or county may designate a non-profit organization to administer its Idaho Gem Grant. Counties may apply for grants on behalf of unincorporated communities.

Eligible Activities

Idaho Gem Grant projects must be geared toward the economic development objective of job creation, job retention or economic diversification.

- **Job creation and/or retention** – These projects involve infrastructure improvements or the elimination of slum and blight conditions that result in the attraction, creation or expansion of a business. These types of projects require committed business partners who are willing to work with both the community, and the Idaho Department of Commerce, towards the creation and implementation of the project.

- **Economic diversification** - These types of projects involve the development of a public asset that will assist a community in diversifying its local economy. An example of a public asset may be an industrial park or publicly owned manufacturing facility.

There may be other types of projects that meet IGG goals but were not mentioned in these examples. To ensure that no viable project falls by the wayside, all potential applicants are encouraged to contact Idaho Department of Commerce Business Development Team to discuss funding possibilities.

Eligible Costs

Idaho Gem Grants are cost reimbursable grants. Allowable costs include:

- Construction materials
- New and rehabilitative construction contracts
- Architect and engineering services
- Legal and professional services required for project implementation
- Equipment and installation
- Advertising or printing necessary to satisfy procurement and legal requirements
- Acquisition of real estate for business development
- Matching funds for other state, federal or foundation economic development grants, provided that the project meets the IGG eligible activities

To be eligible for reimbursement all purchases of goods and services must be in accordance with Idaho Code. This means competitive bidding for materials and construction services and an advertised request for proposal or for professional services, a request for qualifications. It is important to inform your potential vendors of these requirements before obtaining costs estimates. Be sure to consider and include any local, state or federal government requirements such as, but not limited to, contractor licensing, insurance, or appraisal requirements, when preparing the IGG project budget.

Ineligible Activities/Costs

Idaho Gem Grants may not be used for:

- ongoing overhead, operating, or staff costs
- construction, rehabilitation, or operation of active churches, schools, general government facilities, jails or state and federal facilities
- political activities.

Expenses related to administering Idaho Gem Grants are not eligible for reimbursement. Administrative expenses may be used as match for the grant (see matching funds for guidelines).

Matching Funds

IGG grantees must provide no less than 20% match. For example, a grantee receiving \$50,000 must supply at least \$10,000 in match. Both cash and in-kind contributions may be counted as project match. A value equal to 5% of the Idaho Gem Grant award may be counted as “in-kind” for grant administration. Cash match is funding received from private, local, state, federal or foundation sources. In-kind match is the value of donated goods or services instead of cash. All match must be pledged in writing at the time of application submission.

Prior to project completion and the final payment of IGG funds, the expenditure of all match must be documented by receipt, paid invoice, copy of check, time cards, or other written document signed by the match donor. Once a match donation is made, written statements of contribution or other documents signed by the donor are required for reimbursement. For your convenience, a Statement of Contribution form can be found [here](#).

NOTE: In some circumstances IGG funds may be used to match other state, federal, and foundation grants. Consult with the funding agency to determine whether or not IGG funds are eligible as match.

Application Submission Schedule

Idaho Gem Grant applications will be accepted and reviewed on a quarterly basis or at any time that the director of the Idaho Department of Commerce determines it necessary to take advantage of economic development opportunities, subject to the availability of funding. The application deadlines are the third Monday of June, September, December and March.

IGG grant applications must be submitted via the Commerce online grant portal (portal) on or before the above stated deadlines. Contact Jerry Miller jerry.miller@commerce.idaho.gov or Randy Shroll randy.shroll@commerce.idaho.gov for access to the portal. In the event that all funds budgeted for the IGG program are obligated, the Department reserves the right to suspend the acceptance and review of IGG applications.

Grant Administration

The grantee (city or county) will be the administrator of the grant. However, a grantee may, through the adoption of a formal resolution, designate a governing district (highway district, water district etc.) an economic development district, a certified community development corporation, or an Internal Revenue Service recognized non-profit organization as its administrative agent. In all cases the payment of IGG funds will flow through the grantee which may then sub-grant the funds to its designated administrative agent. *Reminder: IGG funds may not be used for grant administration.*

Grant Payment

Grantees will receive payment of funds on a reimbursement basis. Each request for reimbursement must be submitted through the portal and be accompanied by supporting documentation such as invoices, bank statements, or cancelled checks.

Reporting

Grantees are required to provide a project status update via the [portal](#). At its discretion the Department may establish special conditions in the grantee's Idaho Gem Grant contract requiring additional reporting or documentation. Grantees are requested to take "before" and "after" pictures of all construction activities funded through an Idaho Gem Grant and provide those pictures with reports.

Procurement

The procurement of goods and services purchased with Idaho Gem Grant funds must conform to Idaho Code.

- [Idaho Code Title 67, Chapter 28](#) – purchasing by political subdivisions
- [Idaho Code Title 54, Chapter 19](#) – Public Works Contractors
- [Idaho Code Title 67, Chapter 23](#) – design professional qualification based selection

These laws apply to any contractor, consultant or vendor to be paid with Idaho Gem Grant funds. Idaho Gem Grant funds may not be used to reimburse private or nonprofit entities who fail to follow the above referenced procedures.

Project Amendments

Grantees must submit a written request to the Department and receive written approval prior to modifying the budget or scope-of-work of a project.

How to Submit an Idaho Gem Grant

Idaho Gem Grant applications are submitted via the Commerce online portal. If you have submitted for any of the following programs, the same login and password will work for the Idaho Gem Grant Application.

- Idaho Travel Council Grant Application
- Tax Reimbursement Incentive Application
- State Trade Export Program Grant Application
- Rural Idaho Economic Development Professionals Program Application

To gain access to the portal submit an account request by email to jerry.miller@commerce.idaho.gov or randy.shroll@commerce.idaho.gov.

After access to the portal is approved, you will receive a user name, password and instructions via email. All required IGG templates can be downloaded from the grant landing page in the portal or on the IGG website [here](#).