

**Rural Idaho Economic Development Professional
Grant Program**

Application Guide



Rural Idaho Economic Development Professional Grant Program Application Guide 2017-2018

The intent of the Rural Idaho Economic Development Professional Grant Program is to build economic development capacity in rural Idaho. To accomplish this, state funds are appropriated to help rural areas employ full-time Economic Development Professionals who, with a board of directors, manage locally-directed economic development programs.

The ED Professional will work on business attraction, retention, expansion, and diversification projects in partnership with the Department to achieve the economic development goals of both the rural area and the Department. The Department recognizes that a minimum wage and benefit package in the range of \$45,000 to \$50,000 is necessary to hire and retain qualified ED professionals.

IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

Application Webinar: [March 28, 2017 9:00 a.m. \(Mountain Time\)](#)
[March 29, 2017 3:00 p.m. \(Mountain Time\)](#)
Note: Webinars will be recorded and available [here](#).

Application Due Date: May 9, 2017
4:00 p.m. (Mountain Time)

Award Period: July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018 subject to the terms, conditions and satisfactory performance as stipulated in the Memorandum of Understanding.

Definitions

Department – Idaho Department of Commerce

Economic Development Organization (EDO) – The county committee, governmental joint powers committee, or non-profit corporation incorporated by the State of Idaho, designated by the Eligible Applicant to manage the ED Professional and activities funded through the auspices of the Program.

Economic Development Project – Any project that develops new or expands existing businesses, creates new jobs, saves existing jobs, adds value to the state and local tax base, or positions a community to create any of the above.

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 start ups 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 Cindy Lee cindy.lee@commerce.idaho.gov or Jill Eden jill.eden@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 minimum of \$16,000 is required for cash match.* 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 the Department 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 area being served by Program funds does not exceed 50,000 and 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. A representative from the Department shall be provided advanced notice of all EDO meetings and provided with 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 (500 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 (100 Points) – Highest to lowest.
- Median Household Income (100 Points) – Lowest to highest
- Per Capita Income (100 Points) – Lowest to highest
- Average Covered Wage (100 Points) – Lowest to highest
- Assessed Valuation (100 Points) – Lowest to Highest

Work Plan (1000 Points)

Points will be awarded based on the applicant's approach towards completing core economic development activities.

- Need for Funding Statement (500 Points)
- Business Retention and Expansion (100 Points)
- Business Creation (100 Points)
- Business Attraction (100 Points)
- Potentials & Opportunities (100 Points)
- Other (100 Points)

Capacity (500 Points)

- Advance Degree (25 Points) – Applicants will receive points if their Professional has a master’s degree or higher in the disciplines of planning, business or public administration.
- Tenure (100 Points) – Applicants will receive points for having a tenured Professional (10 points for every year their Professional has worked for the EDO for up to 10 years).
- Certifications (100 Points) – Applicants will receive 100 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 (100 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 (100 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 or the National Main Street Center.
- Fringe Benefits (75 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 (500 Points)

- Matching Funds (100 Points) – Applicants will receive 10 points for every thousand dollars matching cash support funds over the minimum of \$16,000 match required in the application.
- Private Financial Support (100 Points) – Applicants will receive 10 points for every thousand dollars of matching cash support originating from a private sector source.
- State Funding (100 Points) – Applicants will receive 2 points per whole percentage of grant request below the maximum amount that may be applied for.
- Operating Structure (50 Points) – Applicants will receive 50 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 (50 Points) – Applicants will receive 50 points for documenting that their by-laws have been revised within the last two calendar years.
- Regionalization (100 Points) – Applicants will receive 100 points if their EDO serves communities located in more than one county.