**Chapter 1: Overview**

**Rural Community Investment Fund Program (RCIF)**

The intent of this program is to provide state funded block grants to benefit rural communities and areas by providing or improving public infrastructure systems that enable communities to retain or create jobs.

Eligible applicants are:

* Cities with a population generally less than twenty-five (25,000) in population. Cities contiguous to large cities (>25,000) are not eligible to apply.
* Counties will less than twenty-five (25,000) population. However, any county may apply for an unincorporated community for projects that have a measurable rural benefit and the sole beneficiary of the project cannot be a large city.
* Indian tribesmay apply if the project site is located on reservation land and within a community of less than 25,000 or the project has a measurable rural benefit and the sole beneficiary of the project cannot be a larger city.

The three eligible applicants may sub-grant Rural Community Investment Fund (RCIF) funds to an eligible and the Idaho Department of Commerce (Commerce) approved sub-recipient.

Eligible RCIF activities include:

Construction or expansion of public infrastructure or publicly regulated utilities or infrastructure; acquisition of land or real estate by an eligible grantee or sub-recipient for purpose of leasing to a business; and new construction, reconditioning, or remodeling of an industrial or commercial building owned by an eligible grantee or sub-recipient for which the building will be leased to a business.

Grant limits are $50,000 to $500,000. However, recent budget allocations have limited total RCIF funding to $400,000 annually. To be competitive, local match is necessary but there is no required percentage.

Applications will be evaluated on their impact to distressed areas, benefits of the project, community support, and the project’s feasibility. A public hearing is required to be held before submission of the application. Applications will be accepted four times a year – the third Monday in March, June, September and December. Applications are evaluated by staff and the Economic Advisory Council (EAC).

This manual is created to identify the rules of the RCIF program and to direct a community on how to prepare an application for RCIF funds. Application forms are located at the Commerce website at [www.commerce.idaho.gov](http://www.commerce.idaho.gov)

Chapter 2 identifies who is eligible to receive RCIF funds, the threshold factors, and the type of activities that are eligible. The chapter further explains other applicable program rules.

Chapter 3 explains the process of meeting the RCIF procurement process for hiring a grant administrator, design professional (architect or engineer) construction contractor or supply and delivery contract. Boilerplate forms and contract attachments are included in this chapter.

Chapter 4 explains the application process. It describes how to submit your application, hold the required public hearings, format the application, and how and who reviews the application. It also provides the role of the Economic Advisory Council, which is an important component of the application review.

Chapter 5 contains two parts, A and B. Part A provides the instructions on how and what needs to be included in the application. It covers specifically the information that will be reviewed by staff. Part B contains the forms. It identifies how the application should be structured and includes the forms that need to be filled out. (Forms to be filled out are available at <http://commerce.idaho.gov/communities/community-grants/rural-community-block-grant-rcbg>

Chapter 6 contains the Financial Forms and Closeout Forms. These are the forms the Grantee will need to fill out and submit to Commerce in order to be reimbursed for work completed and closeout the RCIF project.

If you are interested in applying for a RCIF, check the Commerce website at [www.commerce.idaho.gov](http://www.commerce.idaho.gov) or contact a regional community development specialist at (208) 334-2470. The following page identifies the region and the specialist who represents that region.

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