

Rural Idaho Economic Development Professional Grant Program

Application Guide



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2022-2023

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: 10 AM (Mountain Time) May 25, 2022. Here is a [link](#) to the webinar. (Registration required)
- 2 PM (Mountain Time) June 1, 2022. This is a makeup webinar for those unable to participate on the 25th. Here is a [link](#) to the webinar. (Registration required)
- Draft Application Review: 4PM (Mountain Time) June 3, 2022. By request Commerce Staff will review an applicant's draft. Applicants will need to contact Commerce staff to request feedback.
- Application Due Date: 4:00 p.m. (Mountain Time) June 17th, 2022.
- Award Period: July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 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 in 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, helps a business enhance its productivity, 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 startups etc.

Eligible Applicant – The Idaho county or a group of Idaho counties, cities and/or tribes joining together to submit a single application with populations meeting the grant guidelines.

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 32 hours/week, including the option of job sharing, provided the minimum number of hours have been met.

Part Time – Part time is defined as 20 hours per week.

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

Interim Economic Development Professional – A person that the Economic Development Organization (EDO) has designated to temporarily fill their vacant Economic Development Professional position during the term of the grant. The Department must be notified in advance of this arrangement and approve this arrangement. The hire must work enough hours on economic development to meet the definition of “full-time for programs receiving \$15,001 or greater and part-time those applicants awarded \$15,000 or less.

Vacant Position – For scoring a “Vacant Position refers to any applicant funded through this program in the previous 12 months, whose grant funded position was unfilled for 46 consecutive days or longer. Programs operating with interim economic development professionals will be considered vacant unless the applicant can document that the hire worked full time on economic development activities during their tenure of service.

Please read the rural Idaho Economic Development Professionals (RIEDP) Frequently Asked questions FY2023 found on Commerce’s [grant resources page](#). for more clarity.

Submission

All applications must be submitted through the Department's online [portal](#). Applications 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.

Maximum Request

Applicants may request up to \$30,000 for a full-time position. Applicants wanting to fund a part time position are limited to a request up to \$15,000. Commerce may award amounts below an applicant's request for any reason.

Questions

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

Karen Appelgren	Karen.appelgren@commerce.idaho.gov	208.287.3158
Jenny Hemly	jenny.hemly@commerce.idaho.gov	208.287.3169
Kim Glineski	kimberly.glineski@commerce.idaho.gov	208.287.0771
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Jerry Miller	jerry.miller@commerce.idaho.gov	208.287.0780

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 sustainable program. *A cash match equal to 50% of the amount requested is required.* Cash reserves may not be used to meet the match requirement. 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, professional development, office space, telephone, computer, internet access, necessary office equipment, clerical support, travel for marketing opportunities, and for the development of marketing materials. Matching fund commitments, up to the minimum required, must be documented by the contributor in writing at the time of application.

Eligible Applicants

An applicant must be an Idaho county or a group of Idaho counties, cities and/or tribes joining together to submit a single application. Idaho counties with populations more than 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.

Note: Commerce will award only one grant per county. We will not award funds to programs serving a single city.

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. Applicants are encouraged to have strong private sector representation on their boards or committees. 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 will be assessed on the following criteria:

Applicant Overview: In this section the applicant will discuss their community and economic development needs. The ideal answer will identify inherent barriers facing their communities, identify recent losses of key businesses or industry that have occurred in the last two to three years and explain why their communities cannot self-fund an economic development program. The higher scores will be awarded to applicants who incorporate data into their answer. It is highly recommended that the applicant distinguishes their communities from others competing for this grant. This section will constitute 20% of the application scoring.

Work Plan: In this section reviewers will be evaluating the applicant's approach to economic development. This section will constitute 60% of the application scoring. Specifically, we are interested in the following...

A. Target Industries – Applicants will need to identify three to five industries they will be targeting for expansion and or attraction over the twelve-month grant period. For each industry we want to know why is that industry is a target and how you plan to approach that industry e.g., engage industry groups, attend trade shows etc.?

B. Business Outreach - The applicant will need to spell out their approach for connecting with specific businesses in the industries identified in their “Target Industries” answer. The applicant’s answer should include incentives that might be of use to assist those businesses, the tools they will use to connect with those businesses and the frequency of their contacts. Evaluators also want to know about the other partners you will be using in these outreach efforts.

C. Main Street and Entrepreneurship – Applicants will need to identify tools, activities, and strategies to create, grown and strengthen main street businesses (retail, hospitality and professional services) and or promote entrepreneurship. Answers that specially address proactive measures for helping residents create new businesses will receive higher scores.

D. Place Making – Applicants should describe projects and activities to make their communities more attractive to businesses and workforce. Some of the items discussed in this section might include utilities enhancements, infrastructure projects and affordable housing to name few.

Potentials & Opportunities – In this section applicants should address projects, activities and opportunities not covered in the previous section. This section will account for 20% of the scoring.

Bonus Points – Bonus points will be awarded to applicants based on the following criteria. For applicants serving more than one county this section will be evaluated weighted basis.

- Applicants whose annual unemployment for 2020 was higher than the state rate will receive one (1) bonus point.
- Applicants whose 2020 median household income is below state median household income will receive one (1) bonus point.
- Applicants whose poverty rate is above the state poverty rate will receive one (1) bonus point.
- Applicants whose 2020 assessed valuation is below the median assessed valuation for all applicants will receive one (1) bonus point.
- Applicants will receive bonus points based on the following cost per capita per scale. This is based on population served. See Frequently Asked Questions regarding how population is calculated.
 - If cost per capita is:
 - \$0 to \$1.50, then 15 bonus points will be awarded
 - \$1.51 to \$3.00, then 10 bonus points will be awarded
 - \$3.01 to \$4.50, then 5 bonus points will be awarded.

- There are no bonus points awarded if per capita is \$4.51 or more.

Risk Ratings – Points maybe subtracted from applicants who failed to meet conditions of their MOU or are determined to have the following organizational weaknesses.

- Applicants who within a twelve-month period coinciding with deadline date of this application will lose one (1) point for each instance a monthly report was submitted five (5) days or more late without a Commerce approved extension.
- Applicants who whose request for funds did not include a six-month financial statement as required in item eleven (11) sub section c of the fiscal year 2022 Rural Idaho Economic Development Professional grant agreement will lose one (1) point.
- Applicants who fail to document a formal operating structure will lose one (1) point.
- Applicants who fail document that their bylaws have been reviewed in the last two years will lose one(1) point.
- Vacant Position – Returning programs with a grant supported position vacant for more than 59 consecutive days during the program period from July 1, 2021 thru June 30, 2022 will have the following points deducted from their application score.
 - 60 -89 days – 5points
 - 90-119 days -10 points
 - 120 – days plus – 15 points

Award Criteria

Applicants failing to receive fifty (50) points or higher will not receive funding. Applicants with scores between fifty (50) and sixty (60) points will be limited to no more than fifty percent (50%) of the maximum allowable grant amount. To maximize the reach and effectiveness of the Program, award amounts for applicants achieving a score of sixty-one (61) or higher will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Factors influencing the award amount will include but not be limited to the population of the area covered; unprompted fulfillment of the terms and conditions of previous grant agreements and opportunities to maximize the return of investment. Applicants should not presume that 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.