# Rural Idaho Economic Development Professionals (RIEDP) Frequently Asked Questions FY 2025

**Q.** **What is the link for the application portal?**

**A.** https://idahocommerce.secure.force.com/grants

**Q.** **How do I get a login and password for the portal?**

**A.** Send an email request to grants@commerce.idaho.gov  Note, login and passwords are limited to eligible applicants (cities and counties). Commerce will not issue logins and passwords to third party grant writers or consultants.

**Q.** **I've have a login and password from a previous Idaho Department of Commerce grant application.  Will that login and password work?**

**A.** In most cases it should.  You will need access to the email account used to set up the portal log in.  If that email is no longer available contact grants@commerce.idaho.gov for help.

**Q.** **Who do I contact with a question about an item requested in the application?**

**A.**

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|---|---|---|
| Jerry Miller | jerry.miller@commerce.idaho.gov | 208.287.0780 |
| Cathy Perry | cathy.perry@commerce.idaho.gov | 208.780.5154 |

**Q.** **When is the deadline?**

**A.** 4:00 PM (Mountain Time) May 31, 2024

**Q.** **How much can we apply for?**

**A.** The maximum amount a full-time program may request is **$35,000**. Awards for programs with special conditions on their FY 24 grant agreement are limited to a maximum of **$30,000**.   Part-time programs are limited to **$15,000**. Please note the Department reserves the right to make awards for less than what you request. Only applicants proposing a full time program and scoring 90 points or higher on their application will be considered for any request above $30,000.

**Q.** **Is there a matching fund requirement?**

**A.** Yes.  Applicants will need to document a minimum match equal to 55% of their grant request.  An application requesting $30,000 will need to provide and document at least $16,500. Keep in mind that it takes at least $70,000 to run an effective full-time program and at least $40,000 for a part time effort.  Applicants exceeding the minimum match requirement will have a competitive advantage.

An amount equal to the minimum required match must be spent during the course of program year.

**Q.** **Can donated or in kind or services and/or other considerations be counted towards our cash match requirement?**

**A.** No.  Long term sustainability depends upon your program being able to raise cash.  A cash donation earmarked towards a specific item like a conference scholarship can be counted as cash match.

**Q.** **When do the matching funds need to be committed?**

**A.** Matching funds need to be committed by the application deadline and in your account by October 31.

**Q.** **Must our matching funds come from public sources e.g., cities and counties?**

**A.** No. Programs are encouraged to get their matching funds from a mix of public, non-profit and for-profit sources. Securing multiple sources of match is an important step in building a sustainable economic development program.

**Q.** **Can other grants be used as match?**

**A.** Yes.  If the grant funds do not originate from the Idaho Department of Commerce, the grant is allocated to salary and operations (admin fees from other grants are not counted) and are committed by the grant application deadline.

**Q.** **If awarded, when will the grant funds be available?**

**A.** Grant funds will be disbursed in two installments.  The first installment equal to 50% of the award amount may be requested any time after July 1st provided your grant agreement is fully executed and all reporting is up to date.  Applicants receiving an FY 24 award will need to submit financials covering January 1st – June 30th. A second installment equal to 50% of your grant award may be claimed after January 1st provided your program is current on its monthly reporting requirements, has submitted financial statements covering the first six months of the fiscal year July 1 – December 31st , and is fully compliant with the terms and conditions of the grant assistance agreement.

**Q.** **How often do we need to apply for the RIEDP grant?**

**A.** For the fiscal year 2025 this will be an annual application.

**Q.** **Can RIEDP funds be used for office, travel, and other expenses?**

A.    No. Funds may only be used for salary and benefits. Matching funds may be used for other expenses.

**Q.    What is the difference between an Eligible Applicant, Economic Development Organization (EDO) and a Fiscal Agent.**

- **The Eligible Applicant** is the County or in the case of a joint powers' agreement, the City or County designated to be the lead applicant.  The Eligible Applicant is the entity responsible for submitting the application and will be the primary signatory to the grant agreement.  The Eligible Applicant assumes responsibility for ensuring that the EDO and/or Fiscal Agent follows all Program requirements.

- **The EDO** is the County committee, joint powers committee or non-profit designated by the Eligible Applicant to supervise the Economic Development Professional to carry out the goals and objectives of the Program.

- **The Fiscal Agent** is the entity responsible for tracking program expenses and disbursing grant funds.  The Fiscal Agent can be the Eligible Applicant, EDO or a third party designated by the Eligible Applicant to manage program revenues and expenses.  Using a Fiscal Agent does not absolve the Eligible Applicant from its fiduciary responsibilities for the grant.

**Q.    Are economic development professionals hired through this program required to be employees?**

A.     Yes.  However, exceptions can be made for programs whose contracted professional meets the full or part time definitions within the program guidelines, agrees to abide by all the rules, requirements and procedures outlined in the grant agreement between the Eligible Applicant and the Department, and the professional agrees to avoid all apparent and substantive conflicts of interest. Programs working with contractors are encouraged to have work agreements that ensure access to all records, social media accounts and electronic files generated by the contractor during his or her tenure with the organization.

**Q.    Can a city or group of cities apply for RIEDP funds?**

A.    No. Cities by themselves are not eligible to apply for these funds.  However, a city under the auspices of a joint powers' agreement with a county, group of counties or group of cities and counties, can serve as a lead applicant.  Cities may also serve as an Eligible Applicant's Fiscal Agent.

**Q.    How many RIEDP funded programs may serve a county or group of counties?**

# Rural Idaho Economic Development Professionals (RIEDP)
## Frequently Asked Questions FY 2025

A.    The Department will make no more than one grant per county or group of counties. Counties with multiple programs competing for RIEDP funds should consider unifying their efforts. Multiple applications from a county or group of counties and cities sends a signal that the area lacks the consensus to support an effective economic development program.

**Q.    Can an economic development organization apply for these funds?**

A.    No, however an EDO may prepare the application and documents that are then submitted by an Eligible Applicant.

**Q.    Will the applicant be required to submit information for the "Bonus Points" section of the application?**

A.    All "Bonus Point" will be researched and applied by the Department.

**Q.    How does the scoring work for this application?**

A.    Each section of the application narrative (Application Overview, Work Plan and Potentials and Opportunities) will be assigned a score of 1-5 (1 = Very Poor 2 = Poor 3 = Fair 4 = Good  5 = Very Good) by individual evaluators. Depending on the weighting for the the section the individual scores will be converted using a normalizing calculation. An applicant's score for this section will be an average of the scores assigned by evaluators after weighting. The total number of potential points available for the narrative section of the application is 100.

**Q.    How will "Bonus Point" data be evaluated for programs serving multiple counties?**

A.    1) **Service Area** - The Department will calculate a service area population. For programs that serve a county with a mix of rural and urban cities, the service area population will be the sum of persons residing in rural zip codes. Straight county level statistics will be used for applicants serving a single entirely rural county.

2) **Weighting** – Based on service area population, each county and/or city participating in the program will be assigned a weight adjustment based on their population. For example, Miller and Shroll Counties have a regional economic development program. Miller County has 2,000 persons, Shroll County 1,000. So, the weight or adjustment factor will be.67 for Miller County and .33 for Shroll County.

3) **Calculation**– The median household income for Miller County is $30,000 and the and the median household income for Shroll County is $40,000. To calculate an average wage for the program we will …

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| Miller County | $30,000 x .67 =$20,100 |
| Shroll County | $40,000 x .33 =$13,200 |
| **Adjusted Median Household Income** | **$33,300** |

**Q.** **How will risk ratings be determined?**

**A.** Commerce tracks the dates reports are received and when the six-month financials are submitted. In the application we ask you to document your organizational structure, current bylaws, and documentation as to when those bylaws were last reviewed.

**Q.** **For the purposes of risk rating, how does Commerce define a "Vacant Position"?**

**A.** 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 60 consecutive days or longer. Programs operating with interim economic development professionals will be considered vacant unless the applicant can document that the interim economic development professional will work enough hours on economic development issues to meet the applicable definitions of full time for programs seeking more than $15,001 in grant assistance or part time for those seeking $15,000 or less. The Department must be informed of and approve any interim arrangements in advance of the hire. Programs that applied for and awarded grant funds but did not file any requests for reimbursement will not be assessed any risk rating points.

**Q.** **I forgot my password?**

**A.** Go to the login page https://idahocommerce.secure.force.com/grants and click on the Forgot Your Password link.

**Q.** **Does the Eligible Applicant need to be a city or county?**

**A.** Yes.

**Q.** **How is the population calculated for applicants whose counties may include a mix of urban and rural communities?**

**A.** Using tools provided by Lightcast (formerly Economic Modeling Systems Inc.) the Department calculates population based on rural zip codes. Since zip codes often extend beyond city limits, this methodology factors out population living in residences contiguous to an urban community.

# Rural Idaho Economic Development Professionals (RIEDP) Frequently Asked Questions FY 2025

**Q.** **Are Eligible Applicants and EDOs required to belong to organizations like the Idaho Economic Development Association (IEDA) to apply for these funds?**

A. No.

**Q.** **How do we document our matching fund commitments?**

A. Typically, this should be done through a letter on the contributor's stationary stating the pledged amount, the program year, and approximate date when the funds will be deposited.

**Q.** **For the purpose of this program what is an urban community?**

A. An urban community is an incorporated city with a population greater than 10,000 or a community sharing a common border with a municipality whose population exceeds 10,000 people.

**Q.** **How are award amounts determined?**

A. Applicants failing to receive fifty (50) points or higher will not be recommended for funding subject to final review of the Department director. Applicants with scores between fifty (50) and sixty (60) points will be recommended for no more than $15,000. 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.

**Q.** **What are some good sources of data that might help us with our application?**

A.

Idaho Indicators                  Headwaters Economics
American Community Survey        Bureau of Economic Analysis
Idaho Labor Market Information       Gem State Prospector

**Q.** **What is a full-time program?**

A. A full-time program is one where the professional hired with grant funds works 32 hours a week or more.

**Q.** **What is a part-time program?**

A. A part-time program is one where the professional works 20 hours per week or more but less than 32 hours per week.