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**RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE GRANT PROGRAM**

**NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY & APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

**GUIDELINES AND ELIGIBILITY**

The Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) program is designed to support communities in creating jobs locally and building resilient and diversified economies.

**All applications MUST be submitted via the online grants portal:** [**https://dola.colorado.gov/grants\_portal/**](https://dola.colorado.gov/grants_portal/)

**Please contact your** [**Regional Manager**](https://cdola.colorado.gov/regional-managers) **to discuss project development prior to submission**

**For portal questions, contact Angie Cue at angie.cue@state.co.us**

**Submission Deadline: April 21st, 2022**

**Technical assistance availability**

Applicants are encouraged to reach out to DOLA’s Regional Managers for guidance as they develop their projects.

**Funding**

* $780,000 in funds available for this cycle.
* Applications should not exceed $150,000.
* Funds must be spent by June 30th, 2024.
* Awards will be made by early July 2022.

**Eligibility**

* Rural communities, which are defined as a county with a population of less than 50,000 or a municipality with a population of less than 25,000.
* County or municipal governments as well as council of governments may apply with the following eligible entities as a partner:
	+ Intergovernmental agencies
	+ Housing authorities
	+ Economic development organizations
	+ Nonprofits
	+ Private employers
	+ Tribes

**Types of eligible projects**

Projects that will be funded include plans, construction, programs, and capacity building. All applications must create and retain jobs, either direct or indirect.

* **Job creation and retention -** Both through direct and indirect means.
	+ Direct examples
		- Business attraction and retention projects
		- Projects which support startups or business expansion
		- Projects which attract new industries
	+ Indirect examples
		- Infrastructure and placemaking projects, which enable a local government to activate a space for entrepreneurs and businesses
		- Actionable economic development/diversification plans, marketing studies, consulting service for specific project implementation
			* Any plans or studies should have an associated implementation/action plan, which creates a roadmap for communities
* **Capacity Building -** Under special circumstances DOLA will consider funding local economic development capacity. Staff must be tied to a specific outcome, project, and timeline, which contributes to goals of job creation, business attraction/retention, and economic resilience. REDI funds cannot be used to support staff’s existing, ongoing work. Communities will have to illustrate economic hardship and inability to fund staff within their budget. Capacity building grants can be funded for up to 2 years with the following match requirements.
	+ Match for capacity building - 75/25 year 1; 50/50 year 2 grant/match
	+ If applying for a capacity building grant, the applicant must create a plan for funding the position beyond the grant term.
* **Economic resilience -** Economic resilience is the ability of a community’s economy and systems that support the economy to withstand disruption and thrive in the face of change. Projects that build economic resilience could include any or all of the following:
	+ Economic diversification
	+ Take the long-view and build towards outcomes that will support the future of work
	+ Projects which address local disruptions and economic recovery such as industry transitions, loss of industry, climate change, natural disasters
	+ Workforce development opportunities
	+ Creative projects that build economic ecosystems, which support job growth, as well as the systems that enable/attract people to live and work in a place such as access to workforce support systems like childcare, transit, attainable housing, and activated downtowns. This could include studies, plans, design, and programs. Given its size, REDI cannot fund infrastructure or capacity as it relates to housing, childcare, and transit.
* **Supports entrepreneurial ecosystems-** Entrepreneurial ecosystems provide trainings, networking opportunities, and infrastructure to support local entrepreneurs.
	+ Accelerator and incubator programs or projects, which support entrepreneurs and startups
		- Match for accelerator and incubator programs- 75/25 year 1; 50/50 year 2 grant/match
		- If applying for an accelerator or incubator program grant, the applicant must create a plan for funding the program beyond the term of the grant.
	+ Infrastructure which supports entrepreneurs such as coworking spaces, maker-spaces, workshop space, innovation centers, communal kitchens, etc.

**Grant requirements**

* Grant fund spending is time sensitive. Awards could require spending within 12 months or 18 months of award.
* Match is required. DOLA’s Regional Managers will work with communities to determine the appropriate level of match based on financial data, typically resulting in 20% to 50% match.
* New building construction or significant renovation projects meeting certain thresholds may need to work with DOLA to ensure achievement of energy efficiency measures (e.g., LEED or Green Globes certification or commissioning, HPCP). The project may need to comply with energy efficiency rules if: the project receives 25% or more of its funds from state funding, contains 5,000 or more square feet, includes an HVAC system, or, in the case of renovation projects, the cost of renovation exceeds 25% of the current property value.

**PROJECT SCORING**

* **Community benefit and demonstration of need (20 points)**
	+ Problem, opportunity, or challenge is clearly identified
	+ The project has multiple community benefits
* **Project timeline and outcomes (10 points)**
	+ Feasible timeline
	+ Outcomes clearly identified
	+ Deliverables match desired project outcomes
* **Job creation and retention (directly and indirectly-could focus on any of the categories below) (30 points)**
* Expands a local business/industry
* Anticipated jobs created and supported
* Consideration for job quality such as pay, workforce development opportunities, and workplace culture will result in higher scores
* Anticipated businesses attracted
* Serves to retain existing businesses in changing economic climates
* Provides services which attract/support entrepreneurs
* Workforce development such as skill building opportunities, trainings, and curriculum development
* **Economic resilience (required to respond to #1 and a minimum of one other category) (20 points)**
1. **Required**: Projects take the long-view and build towards outcomes that will support the future of work
	1. ***Projects which consider strengthening or mitigating impacts of future disruptions such as climate change, natural disasters, drought, and industry transitions will result in higher scores.***
2. Increases economic diversification
3. Promotes innovation and creativity
4. Builds economic ecosystems, which support job growth, as well as the systems that enable/attract people to live and work in a place
* **Collaboration and readiness (15 points)**
	+ Harmonizes with and/or implements existing plans such as Just Transition plans, comprehensive plans, economic/community development plans, resilience plans, and natural hazard plans.
	+ Promotes collaboration by either:
		- Promoting regional economic development
		- Leveraging resources and ideas of stakeholders across the community
	+ Aligns with other sources of funding/program participation to meet community goals
	+ Has strong support from local governments, workforce agencies or boards, and/or partner agencies
	+ The project realizes mutual community benefits
* **Local effort and match (5 points)**
	+ Cash match is appropriate given unrestricted fund balance
	+ Community has made every effort to contribute as much as possible to the project

**AWARD PROCESS**

The DOLA Executive Director makes all final funding decisions. If a project is approved, DOLA staff will work with the grantee on the contracting process.

Local governments are required to submit regular (monthly or quarterly) reports based on the project’s scope of work. Reports and payment requests will be done through the DOLA Grants Portal.

**REDI Program Manager:**

Patrick Garrett

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720.403.3865

**APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

**Applicant/Contact Information**

* Local Government/Organization
* Principal Representative
* Responsible Administrator for the Application (This is the person who will receive grant communications)
* Chief Elected Information

**Community Information**

* Population of Town/Municipality
* Population of County
* Data Source Used
* Community Benefit of Project

**Project Description and Readiness**

* Project Name: Begin with your community name. Example: Oak Creek PROJECT X, Y, Z
* Amount requested
* Matching funds
* Project type (drop down and select one)
* Short Project Description (2-3 sentences describing the project).
* Project Overview
	+ Give an overview of the project
	+ Describe the impact of the project on your community, needs it meets, and benefits it realizes
	+ If this project is a piece of a larger program or project, please describe the other phases of the project
* Project outcomes/key deliverables
* Project readiness to begin
* Project timeline
* Description of project scope of work including timeline and deliverables.
* Upload any supporting documents (studies, preliminary reports, letters of support, etc.) as a single PDF document.

**Job creation:** Describe how this project creates or retains jobs locally. This could include both direct and indirect creation/retention. Consider one or more of the following in your answer:

* How many anticipated jobs will this project create?
* How will this project support expansion of an existing industry or business?
* How will this project support retention of current businesses?
* How will this project help attract businesses in the future?
* How will this project expand services available to businesses or entrepreneurs?
* How will this project support or create opportunities for the local workforce?

**Economic resilience:** Describe how this project builds economic resilience locally or regionally? Economic resilience is the ability of a community’s economy and systems that support the economy to withstand disruption and thrive in the face of change. You are required to respond to #1 with #2-4 as optional:

1. **Required:** How does this project take a long-term view of the community and build towards outcomes that will endure for future generations? Consider how this project will contribute to the vision for your community in the next decade and/or how programs/infrastructure will adapt to meet future needs.
2. How will this project increase economic diversification locally?
3. Does this project bring an innovative approach to the challenge?
4. How will this project strengthen the systems that enable/attract people to live and work in the community?

**Collaboration:** Describe support for this project. Consider one or more of the following in your answer:

* How does this project align with community or regional plans, goals, or projects?
* How does this project support local or regional collaboration? What partners are at the table?

**Construction/Renovation Projects only**: If this project involves new construction or renovating a building, please upload a document responding to the following items:

1. Select type of project - new construction, renovation, new construction and renovation
2. List the project square footage (new construction & renovation).
3. What is the current property value? Current property value is determined based on the assessed or appraised value.
4. Does/Will the building contain an HVAC system?
5. Is the building in a floodplain?
6. Is this grant application to complete work on a State registered historic building, structure, site or in a State Historic District? If yes, please provide the registry number. If applicable, attach any supporting documents related to its listing on the Registry.

 **Project Budget & Current Year Financial Information**

* Total project budget
* Private investment, if applicable
* How were cost estimates determined?
* Please download and complete the Budget/Financial Template with the lead agency information as well as any co-applicants on this application. The Budget/Financial Template is on the DOLA website at: <https://cdola.colorado.gov/funding-programs/rural-economic-development-initiative>. Please upload the completed Project Budget/Financial in an Excel format and name it <OrganizationBudget.xls. Example: “GunnisonCountyBudget.xls”

**Tabor** **Compliance**

* Does applicant jurisdiction have voter authorization to receive and expend state grants without regard to TABOR spending limits?

**Official Action**

Date of official board, Council or Commission action to submit application.

**POST GRANT AWARD**

* **Tracking** - Communities will be required to track quarterly milestones through the contract period as well as the impact of the grant for up to three years following the award through a quick survey. This survey will ask about the following:
	+ Jobs created or supported or anticipated jobs created
	+ If the project was a planning document, what has been implemented as a result of the plan?
	+ Did the project lead to other economic development projects or opportunities?
	+ Approximate number of workers who received support or benefit as a result of the project? What did this support look like?
	+ Approximate number of entrepreneurs who received support or benefit as a result of the project? What did this support look like?
	+ Did the project directly or indirectly lead to attraction of new businesses or industries?
	+ How is the project contributing to your long-term goals?
* Projects must meet performance criteria, such as construction completion milestones or other project deliverables. Projects may be denied reimbursement or may be required to pay back funds if performance criteria are not met.
* Applicants must follow local procurement rules. If rules are not in place, State procurement rules must be followed.