

Building Entrepreneurial Communities Act Grant Program

General Overview of Requirements

Next Deadline – Fall 2010

Purpose of the Building Entrepreneurial Communities Act (BECA)

The Building Entrepreneurial Communities Act grant program supports economically depressed rural areas of Nebraska in building entrepreneurial communities through grants that create community capacity to build and sustain programs that generate and retain wealth in the community and region.

The Department of Economic Development, with assistance provided by the Rural Development Commission, has established and administers a grant process to provide grants to **two or more** local units of government or census tracts that are collaborating on a project related to the purpose of the Building Entrepreneurial Communities Program with priority given to projects that best alleviate chronic economic distress. (*Exception: Planning grants may be applied for by a single applicant who is in a Limited Resource Areas without a partnering entity.*)

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include local units of government or census tracts. At least two local units of government or census tracts must collaborate on the project. At least one of the units of government or census tracts must have **chronic economic distress** as indicated by:

1. An unemployment rate that exceeds the statewide average unemployment rate;
2. A per capita income below the statewide average per capita income; or
3. A population loss between the two most recent federal decennial censuses.

OR meet the **limited resource area** criteria as indicated by:

1. A per capita income below the statewide average per capita income by at least twenty percent; or
2. A population loss in the previous 20 years of at least twenty percent.

Eligible Activities

Eligible activities must be projects that address one (or more) of the following:

1. Provide education and technical assistance to energize small business development and entrepreneurship;
2. Provide technical assistance to facilitate small business transfer;
3. Build community business capacity and leadership programs;
4. Generate opportunities that will attract and retain young people and families;
5. Provide education about philanthropy and intergenerational transfer of wealth;
6. Build community endowments to support these activities; (*Note: this grant is NOT seed money for endowments, it is for education on how to build endowments.*)
7. Establish community initiatives to attract new residents; and
8. Provide marketing assistance to communities to attract new residents from outside the State of Nebraska. Marketing assistance may include the creation of new web sites, the improvement of existing web sites, creation and distribution of printed or

electronic marketing materials, and programs which promote the community to new residents. (*Note: this activity requires you to market OUTSIDE the State of Nebraska.*)

Funding Levels: See Planning Grant and Coalition Project Grant information below

Planning Grants

Limited Resource Areas are the only eligible applicants. Planning grants may be awarded in amounts not exceeding \$5,000 for the purpose of establishing collaborations and developing proposals for submission in later grant cycles. There is **no match requirement** for planning grants and a single entity may apply for a planning grant to assist in building collaborations.

The planning grant is for coalition building activities and is not funding for projects. Examples of use include, but are not limited to, publicizing planning meetings, facilitator fees and travel, photocopying plans, and other coalition building activities.

Coalition Project Grants

The maximum amount for an award per coalition project is \$75,000. Coalition grant recipients shall provide fifty cents of matching funds in CASH for each dollar of grant funds, except that in *Limited Resource Areas* the CASH match requirement is twenty-five cents for each dollar of grant funds. Matching funds shall be from sources other than state and federal programs. Grants shall be awarded directly to one of the local units of government representing the collaborative project. *In-kind match is not eligible. This includes salaries of existing staff, donation of meeting space, use of office equipment, etc. Match must be CASH (new financial resources).*

Grant recipients have two years from the date of grant announcement to expend the grant funds. **No local unit of government or census tract shall receive funding for more than one project in a fiscal year.** Grants may be requested for any amount of \$500 and above.

Definition of Local Unit of Government

For the purposes of this grant program, the definition of "local units of government" is: counties, municipalities, villages, Native American tribes, or school districts.

NOTE: All local government applicant partners must provide a statement of community consideration and approval of project application. This approval does not need to be presented with the application but **MUST** be presented prior to the approval of any request for reimbursement. Acceptable statements include village, community, or county minutes of meetings where project is discussed and approved.

These grants are awarded by the Department of Economic Development and administered by the Rural Development Commission. For more information, contact Linda Fettig, Nebraska Rural Development Commission, linda.fettig@nebraska.gov or 308-380-4966.