

Action Alert -- Economic Development Opportunity!

If you live in Nebraska, you have until February 9, 2007, to apply for a Building Entrepreneurial Communities (BECA) grant.

Purpose of the Building Entrepreneurial Communities Act (BECA)

The purpose of the Building Entrepreneurial Communities Program is to support economically depressed rural areas of Nebraska in building entrepreneurial communities through grants that will create community capacity to build and sustain programs to generate and retain wealth in the community and region.

The Department of Economic Development (DED), with assistance provided by the Rural Development Commission (RDC), shall establish and administer a grant process to provide grants to two or more municipalities or counties 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.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include every local government (municipality or county). Two or more local governments must collaborate on the project. At least one of the local governments must have chronic economic distress as indicated by:

1. An unemployment rate which 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.

Note: see section following the Application Form for the distress criteria information

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; and
6. Build community endowments to support these activities. Note: this grant is NOT seed money for endowments; it is education on how to build endowments.

Match Requirements

Grant recipients shall provide a dollar-for-dollar cash match. Matching funds shall be from sources other than state and federal programs.

Note: the match does NOT have to come from village, city, or county budgets. Local money includes LB840 funds, foundations, private donations, fundraisers, and even registration fees from the planned services. If you have questions about proposed match sources, contact the Rural Development Commission for clarification prior to submitting your application.

Funding Levels

The maximum amount for an award per collaboration project is \$75,000. Grant recipients have two years to expend the grant funds. No municipality or county shall receive funding for more than one project in a fiscal year. Grants may be requested for any amount of \$500 and above.

Application Deadline

All applications must be **received** at either the Nebraska Department of Economic Development Lincoln office **or** the Nebraska Rural Development Commission North Platte office by 12:00 p.m. (CST) Friday, February 9, 2007.

One (1) original application and seven (7) complete copies must be submitted. Staple sets in the upper left corner; do not bind. You do not need to include copies of the application guidelines or distress criteria spreadsheet in your application. No faxes or email copies will be accepted. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

All **courier** or **mailed** applications should be sent to:

Building Entrepreneurial Communities
Nebraska Rural Development Commission
402 East State Farm Road
P.O. Box 310
North Platte, NE 69103

Applications may be **hand-delivered** to the Commission's **North Platte** address above **OR** to:

Building Entrepreneurial Communities
Nebraska Department of Economic Development
Fourth Floor, State Office Building
Lincoln, NE

Match Requirements - Grant recipients shall provide a dollar-for-dollar cash match. Matching funds shall be from sources other than state and federal programs. Grant application and complete lists of qualifying towns and counties

can be found at:

<http://www.ruralnebraska.info/library/BECA%20Application%20Guideline%202007.pdf>

Will your idea qualify for this grant? Contact Linda Fettig, Rural Development Commission, 308.749.2291 or: linda.fettig@ded.ne.gov