



## 2017 Rural Business Development Grant

### California Application Information

#### **Purpose of Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG)**

The RBDG program is designed to support and provide targeted technical assistance, training and other activities that lead to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas.

#### **Who can apply for this program?**

Public and private organizations and governmental bodies can apply for RBDG funding. These categories include non-profit corporations, public entities (such as governmental bodies and public agencies), institutions of higher education, rural cooperatives, and federally recognized tribes (that are also eligible for specific set-aside funds). **Please note: Private businesses and individuals are not eligible to apply.**

#### **Where are projects located?**

Projects must benefit *rural areas or towns outside the urbanized area of any city with a population of 50,000 or more*. You are encouraged to check on the eligibility of a project's location prior to applying. The applicant does not need to be in a rural area but the beneficiaries of the project need to be in a rural area. To determine rural areas, visit this web site. Check [eligible areas](#). (Use the first link under Rural Business Services.)

#### **How much funding is available?**

Per the RBDG regulations each State receives an allocation of funds. California typically receives between \$500,000 and \$800,000. Per program regulations grants can range from \$10,000 to \$500,000. **However**, in order to meet needs throughout the state, grants may average between \$50,000 and \$60,000.

Eligible Native American applicants (tribes and others acting on their behalf) may apply for funding from a Native American set-aside. This set-aside is a separate national competition.

### **How may grant funds be used?**

Funding may be used for “enterprise type grants” that benefit small and emerging businesses for such things as:

- Training and technical assistance, such as project planning, business counseling/training, market research, feasibility studies, professional/technical reports, or product/service improvements,
- Acquisition or development of land, easements, or rights of way; construction, conversion, renovation, of buildings, plants, machinery, equipment, access streets and roads, parking areas, utilities,
- Pollution control and abatement,
- Capitalization of revolving loan fund, including funds that will make loans for start-ups and working capital,
- Distance adult learning for job training and advancement,
- Rural transportation improvement,
- Community economic development,
- Technology-based economic development,
- Feasibility studies and business plans,
- Leadership and entrepreneur training,
- Rural business incubators, and
- Long-term business strategic planning

“Opportunity type grants” are **very limited** in availability, and should be discussed with Rural Development staff before applications are developed. Funds for these grants may be used for community economic development, technology-based economic development, feasibility studies and business plans, rural business incubators, and long-term business strategic planning. These projects must be tied to regional development plans.

### **How are applications evaluated?**

Since applications are competitive, you are strongly advised to review the regulations that govern the program. Please use the following link to access the regulations:

[7 CFR Part 4280 Subpart E - Electronic Code of Federal Regulations](#)

Pay particular attention to “*Section 4280.435, Scoring criteria.*” Applications will be scored based on the criteria in this section.

Applications will first be reviewed to determine eligibility. Eligible applications will then be reviewed and scored.

**When are applications due?**

*Native American Applications* are due in a local or the State office: **March 17, 2017.**

*General Applications* are due in a local or the State office: **April 17, 2017.**

**How will notification of selection be made?**

All applicants will be notified by Rural Development staff as to the status of their applications. This notification may only be a preliminary notification and not the final disposition of the application.

***Please be sure to contact a Rural Development staff person to discuss the eligibility of your project and to address any questions or concerns you might have, and how to apply.***

**California State Rural Development Staff Contacts**

USDA Rural Development  
Attn: Business & Cooperative Programs  
430 G St, Agency 4169  
Davis, CA 95616

Main Phone Number: (530) 792-5800

[Karen Rich](#), California Business & Cooperative Programs Director, Phone: (530) 792-5825

[Martin Zone](#), BCP Specialist, Phone: (530) 792-5829

[Maretta Siatunuu](#), BCP Specialist, Phone: (530) 792-5801

[Krista Minges](#), BCP Specialist, Phone: (530) 792-5818

**Local Contacts:**

**Alturas Office**

[Angela Cross](#), Area Specialist, (530) 233-4137 ext. 113

**Bakersfield Office**

[Dan Johnson](#), Area Specialist, Phone: (661) 336-0967

**Eureka Office**

[Debbie Coggins](#), Area Specialist, Phone: (707) 443-6714 ext. 107

**Fresno Office**

[Lee Takikawa](#), BCP Specialist, Phone: (559) 276-7494 ext. 134

**Indio Office**

[Matt Koch](#), Area Specialist, Phone: (760) 347-3675 ext. 115

**Oroville Office**

[Tammy Laizure](#), Area Specialist, Phone: (530) 533-4401 ext. 131

**Salinas Office**

[Rick Sturtevant](#), Area Specialist, Phone: (831) 757-5294 ext. 130

**Santa Rosa Office**

[Jennifer Cooler](#), Area Specialist, Phone: (707) 536-0245

**Yreka Office**

[Kevin DeMers](#), Area Specialist, Phone: (530) 842-6123 ext. 112

For more information visit the [USDA Rural Development California website](https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants/ca) at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants/ca> .

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