



## DELAWARE – MARYLAND STATE OFFICE

### Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) Application Guide

#### RBDG Purpose and Eligibility:

As specified in [7 CFR Part 4280 Subpart E – Rural Business Development Grants](#), the purpose of the RBDG is to fund various business enterprise and business opportunity projects that serve rural areas. Consequently, applicants need to identify whether applying for a business enterprise or business opportunity project.

*Business Enterprise Projects:* Benefit specific small and emerging businesses (private and/or nonprofit business which will employ 50 or fewer new employees and has less than \$1MM in gross revenue) in rural areas. Projects must have a reasonable prospect that they will result in the development or financing of small and emerging businesses.

*Business Opportunity Projects:* Provide business and economic development services in rural areas that are consistent with local and area-wide strategic plans for community and economic development. Projects must have a reasonable prospect that they will result in economic development.

To be eligible for funding, applicants must also demonstrate a need for the proposed project and include a basis for determining the success or failure of the project.

#### Funding Provisions:

There is no maximum grant amount for enterprise grants; however, smaller requests are given higher priority. Opportunity grants are limited to a maximum award of \$50,000 for unreserved funds. Grants will be considered for the amount needed to assist with completion of a proposed project, provided the project can reasonably be expected to be completed within 1 full year.

#### Applying for a Grant:

**Applicants should contact Business and Cooperative Programs at 302.857.3628 to discuss proposed projects with a Program Specialist prior to submitting an application. Applications must be received by 4:30PM EST on May 2, 2016 to compete for FY16 funding.** All applicants must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number, which can be obtained at no cost via a toll-free request line at 1-866-705-5711 or online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. Additionally, applicants must register their DUNS number through the System for Awards Management (SAM) prior to submitting an application, which can be done online at <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>. Applicants are encouraged to begin



both of these processes well in advance of the specified application deadline and maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times. To submit a complete application package, as specified in § 4280.427, please provide all of the following information by the specified application deadline:

1. **An original SF 424, [“Application for Federal Assistance”](#);**  
*For Item 11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number, use 10.351 – Rural Business Development Grant.*
2. **An original [Form RD 1940-20, “Request for Environmental Information”](#);**
3. **Copies of applicant organizational documents (articles, by-laws, etc.) showing legal existence and authority to perform activities under the grant;**
4. **A Scope of Work, that includes the following:**
  - a. Type of project (Business Enterprise or Business Opportunity);
  - b. Description of the proposed project (RLF, Technical Assistance, Industrial Site, Business Opportunity, and Other Business Development); and
  - c. Details of the proposed activities to be accomplished and timeframes for completion of each task, the number of month’s duration of the project (not to exceed 12 months), and the estimated time it will take from grant approval to project implementation.
5. **A written narrative that includes, at a minimum, the following:**
  - a. Explanation of why the project is needed, the benefits of the project, how the projects meets the grant eligible purposes; and how the project does not duplicate existing programs of organization or other organizations;
  - b. Area to be served, identifying each governmental unit (i.e., community, town, county, region, etc.) to be affected by the project;  
*Projects covering multiple locations or large geographical areas such as one or two counties need to specify all areas being served.*
  - c. Description of how the project will coordinate economic development activities with other economic development activities within the project area (i.e. local and area-wide strategic plans, etc.);
  - d. Businesses to be assisted, if appropriate, and economic development to be accomplished;  
*Written evidence must be provided from the businesses to be assisted; generic or duplicated letters are not acceptable.*
  - e. Explanation of how the project will result in newly created, increased or supported jobs in the area and the number of projected new and supported jobs within the next 3 years;



*Written evidence must be provided. Generic or duplicated letters are not acceptable and letters must be provided by the business to be assisted, make a connection to project activities, and provide information relative to jobs to be created or supported.*

- f. A description of the applicant's demonstrated capability and experience in providing the proposed project assistance or similar economic development activities, including experience of key staff members and persons who will be providing the proposed project activities and managing the project;  
*Written evidence must be provided, and may include a description of experience supplied and certified by the applicant based upon employee or consultant resumes.*
  - g. Method and rationale used to select the areas and businesses that will receive the service; and
  - h. Brief description of how the work will be performed including whether organizational staff or consultants or contractors will be used.
6. **Latest 3 years of financial information (balance sheets, income statements, and cash flow statements) to show the applicant's financial capacity to carry out the proposed work and a current audited report, if available;**
  7. **Intergovernmental review comments from the State Single Point of Contact;**  
*CFDA Number 10.351 – Rural Business Development Grant.*
  8. **Documentation regarding the availability and amount of other funds to be used in conjunction with funds from the RBDG;**  
*Written evidence of other committed funding must be provided. Also, other funding cannot be contingent on RBDG funding.*
  9. **A project budget which includes salaries, fringe benefits, consultant costs, indirect costs\*, and other appropriate direct costs for the project;**  
*\*If indirect costs are being claimed, also submit a copy of your current approved Federal Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.*
  10. **RBDG construction projects must conform to 7 CFR Part 1924 Subpart A – Planning and Performing Construction and Other Development requirements; and**
  11. **Identify any known relationships or associations that your organization, its employees, or Board Members may have with a USDA Rural Development employee, or if there is none.**  
*This identification will not affect your application status, but will allow us to make special provisions for processing your application.*



Applications must include all of the above information in order to be complete. Applicants should contact Business and Cooperative Programs at 302.857.3628 to discuss proposed projects with a Program Specialist prior to submitting an application. After discussion with a Program Specialist, applications should be sent via regular or express mail to:

USDA Rural Development  
ATTN: Business and Cooperative Programs  
1221 College Park Drive, Suite 200  
Dover, DE 19904

#### General Processing and Scoring:

Each application will be reviewed and assigned a priority rating score in accordance with the following priorities:

- Leveraging (other funding)
- Economic conditions (i.e., natural disaster trauma, job loss, long-term poverty, long-term population decline)
- Population
- Unemployment
- Median Household Income
- Experience
- Small business start-up or expansion
- Jobs created or supported
- Size of grant request
- Indirect cost
- Discretionary points\* (geographic distribution, Secretary of Agriculture Initiatives, State strategic goals) *\*Discretionary points may only be assigned to initial grants. Since Congress mandated the RBDG program operate essentially the same as the former RBEG and RBOG programs, any grants received by applicants under those programs are considered RBDG grants and would not be eligible for discretionary points.*

Applications will be selected for funding based on the priority ratings and the total funds available for the program.

#### **Business and Cooperative Programs Contact Information**

Letitia Nichols, Program Director, [letitia.nichols@de.usda.gov](mailto:letitia.nichols@de.usda.gov)  
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**[www.rd.usda.gov/de](http://www.rd.usda.gov/de) | [www.rd.usda.gov/md](http://www.rd.usda.gov/md)**  
**“Committed to the future of rural communities.”**