

Introduction

Utah Code Section 63N-4-802 establishes the Rural Opportunity Program within the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity (GOEO). This program houses several funding opportunities for rural communities and businesses including the Rural County Grant (RCG). The Rural Opportunity Advisory Committee, created in Section 63N-4-804, oversees the administration of all grants under this program.

Rural County Grant

The Rural County Grant is designed to empower rural county governments to manage their own unique economic development opportunities, and to take responsibility for planning, projects, and activities that will lead to improved economies. The grant is intended to address economic development needs, which may include:

- Business recruitment, development, and expansion;
- Workforce training and development; and
- Infrastructure, industrial building development, and capital facilities improvements for business development.

Rural counties in the State of Utah of the third, fourth, fifth, or sixth class are eligible to apply for the Rural County Grant. For a full list of eligible counties, see Appendix A. A rural county may receive grant funding up to \$200,000 annually. Funds are distributed each fiscal year to rural counties who meet the qualifying requirements listed below.

QUALIFYING REQUIREMENTS

- A rural county must form and maintain a functioning County Economic Opportunity Advisory Board (CEO Board) (*see Appendix B*).
- The county must have complied with annual reporting and accounted for RCG funds distributed to them for use during the previous fiscal year. Annual reporting is due no later than September 1 of each year.
- No later than October 1, the county must submit a formal application each fiscal year that includes a description of its anticipated economic development projects and activities, as approved by the county legislative body and based upon the CEO Board's advice and recommendations.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

As noted above, on or before September 1 of each year, a county that received an RCG in the previous fiscal year shall provide a written report. Each CEO board shall assist and advise the county legislative body in preparing reporting requirements for grant money received, and as required by the Rural

Opportunity Advisory Committee (*see Appendix C*). Counties must submit their annual reports before they can be considered for a new RCG. For information regarding the Rural Opportunity Advisory Committee, see Appendix D.

APPLICATION

Upon approval of the previous year's report, qualified rural counties will have access to an online portal to apply for a new RCG. The basic elements of the application are found in Appendix E. Applicants are encouraged to design new economic development projects and activities, and budget grant funding based on the needs of the county, including the needs of cities and towns within its boundaries.

Each applicant must submit a scope of work describing projects and activities that may include: business recruitment, development, and expansion; workforce training and development; and, infrastructure, industrial building development, and capital facilities improvements for business development. The application also requires a line-item budget and budget narrative explaining how grant funds will be used, and a description of expected deliverables and outcomes. Based on the expected deliverables and outcomes, applicants will propose specific performance measures to which they will be held accountable for their use of the grant funds.

Substantial lack of use of funds over consecutive years may result in application denial or the withholding of new grant funds until all previously awarded funds are spent or encumbered.

GRANT AGREEMENT AND TERMS

Upon application approval, the State of Utah and the applying rural county will enter into a contract for the RCG. The terms of the contract will match the state's fiscal year, beginning July 1 of one year and ending June 30 of the following year.

GRANT FUND DISTRIBUTION

The full amount of awarded RCG funds, up to \$200,000, will be distributed to each qualified rural county after application approval and upon contract execution. Awarded counties must also submit an invoice for the award amount for payment to be processed.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Annual Reporting Portal Opens: May 15
- Annual Reporting Portal Closes: September 1 at 5 pm MDT
- Applications Open upon Annual Report compliance: As early as July 1
- Fund Distribution: Upon Approval, Contracting, and Invoice Processing
- Grant Contract Term: July 1 of current year through June 30 of the following year

Appendix A

Rural County Grant Qualified Counties

Rural Counties in the State of Utah of the third, fourth, fifth, or sixth class that created and maintain an active County Economic Opportunity Advisory Board (CEO Board), are eligible to apply for grants under the Rural County Grant. Rural Counties by classification (State Code 17-50-501), are:

Counties of the Third Class (Populations from 40,000 to 174,999)

- Cache County
- Tooele County
- Box Elder County
- Iron County
- Summit County

Counties of the Fourth Class (Populations from 11,000 to 39,999)

- Uintah County
- Wasatch County
- Sanpete County
- Sevier County
- Carbon County
- Duchesne County
- San Juan County
- Millard County.
- Morgan County
- Juab County

Counties of the Fifth Class (Populations from 4,000 to 10,999)

- Emery County
- Grand County
- Kane County
- Beaver County
- Garfield County

Counties of the Sixth Class (Populations less than 4,000)

- Wayne County
- Rich County
- Piute County
- Daggett County

Appendix B

County Economic Opportunity Advisory Board (CEO Board)

"CEO board" means a County Economic Opportunity Advisory Board as described in Utah Code Subsection 63N-4-803. Each rural county that seeks to obtain a Rural County Grant shall create a CEO board composed of at least the following members appointed by the county legislative body:

- a county representative;
- a representative of a municipality in the county;
- a workforce development representative;
- a private-sector representative; and
- a member of the public who lives in the county.

The county legislative body may also appoint additional members with experience or expertise in economic development matters. In appointing members of the CEO board, the county legislative body may consider gender and socioeconomic diversity.

Each CEO board shall assist and advise the county legislative body on:

- applying for a Rural County Grant;
- what projects should be funded by grant money provided to a rural county; and
- preparing reporting requirements for grant money received by a rural county.

CEO Boards are subject to the Utah Open and Public Meetings Act (Utah Code § 52-4-101 through 52-4-305), and are expected to abide by ethics in governance and conflict of interest practices.

Appointment and Terms of CEO Board Members

1. Appointment and Terms:
 - a. The county legislative body shall appoint each new member or reappointed members to a four-year term. It is encouraged that an appointed member of the CEO Board be limited to serving two (2) consecutive terms.
 - b. The county legislative body shall, at the time of appointment or reappointment, adjust the length of terms to ensure that the terms of advisory board members appointed by the county legislative body are staggered so that approximately half of the appointed advisory board members are appointed every two years.
2. The CEO Board shall elect a chair of the advisory board annually. It is encouraged that a CEO Board Chair serves for no more than two (2) consecutive years.
3. The CEO Board shall elect a vice chair annually from among the advisory board members.
4. When a vacancy occurs in the membership for any reason, the county legislative body shall appoint the replacement for the unexpired term.
5. A majority of the CEO Board constitutes a quorum for the purpose of conducting advisory board business, and the action of a majority of a quorum constitutes the action of the board.

Appendix C

Rural County Grant Reporting Requirements

(Required by the Rural Opportunity Advisory Committee)

On or before September 1 of each year, a community that has received a grant under this program in the previous 12 months shall provide a written report to the Advisory Committee that describes:

- the amount of grant money the county has received;
- how grant money has been distributed by the community, including:
 - which companies or entities have utilized grant money;
 - how much grant money each company or entity has received; and
 - how each company or entity has used the money;
- an evaluation of the effectiveness of awarded grants in improving economic development in the community, including:
 - the number of jobs created;
 - infrastructure that has been created; and
 - capital improvements in the community;
- how much matching money has been utilized by the community and what entities or sources have provided the matching money; and
- any other reporting, auditing, or post-performance requirements established by the Center for Rural Development in collaboration with the Advisory Committee.

Appendix D

Responsibilities of the Rural Opportunity Advisory Committee

"Rural Opportunity Advisory Committee" refers to the committee created in Section 63N-4-804.

The Rural Opportunity Advisory Committee is made up of seven members appointed by the executive director of the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity (GOEO), at least five of whom shall reside in a rural county.

Grant Oversight

The Rural Opportunity Advisory Committee shall oversee the Rural County Grant as administered by the office. In overseeing the grant, the Rural Opportunity Advisory Committee shall advise and make recommendations to the office regarding the awarding of grants and loans under the Rural Opportunity Program. Grants and loans to rural communities will address the economic development needs of rural communities, including:

- business recruitment, development, and expansion;
- workforce training and development; and
- infrastructure, industrial building development, and capital facilities improvements for business development.

Rules and Reporting Criteria

The Rural Opportunity Advisory Committee will collaborate with the office to make rules establishing the eligibility and reporting criteria for the rural county to receive grant money, including:

- the form and process for a county to submit an application to the Rural Opportunity Advisory Committee for a grant;
- the method of scoring and prioritizing grant program applications from rural counties;
- the reporting, auditing, and post-performance requirements for a rural county that receives grant money; and
- any deadlines that shall be met by a rural county when applying for a grant.

Appendix E

Basic Elements of the Rural County Grant Application

Organizational Information

- Name of applying county
- Mailing address
- Primary and Secondary Contact names, emails, and phone numbers
- Amount of grant funding requested for the current fiscal year, up to \$200,000

Supporting Documentation

To be uploaded as part of the online application:

- County's W9 form
- List of CEO Board members, including names, titles (chair, vice chair, etc.), terms, organizations each member represents, and contact information (A template will be provided.)
- Letter from the CEO Board attesting to their participation as an advisor to the county governing body
- Invoice from the county for the amount of grant funds requested

Scope of Work

In the narrative field:

Enter a Scope of Work describing proposed Rural County Grant projects and activities to be engaged in and completed in the fiscal year. Describe what type of work will be done, how the projects and activities will be completed, and what the economic development goals and benchmarks will be.

Describe metrics for success, such as, how projects and activities will be measured, tracked and recorded against goals and benchmarks, and how projects and activities will affect business recruitment, development, and expansion; workforce training and development; and/or infrastructure, industrial building development, and capital facilities improvements for business development.

Deliverables and Outcomes

In the narrative field:

Describe what the completed economic development projects and activities will look like, such as, what populations or industry sectors will be affected, if business opportunities will be enhanced and how, and if jobs will be created or retained. Expected outcomes are the desired results of the county's proposed project(s) and should align with the performance metrics identified in the Scope of Work

Budget

In the budget narrative field:

- Explain the funding requirements of the project

- Include calculated project bids
- Provide estimated cost to administer the grant
- Identify matching funds and their sources that will contribute to the overall project plan

Counties shall also submit a proposed budget in spreadsheet format itemizing the use of funds. An Excel spreadsheet template will be provided. Download the spreadsheet, fill it out with project and activity information, estimated costs, and how much of the grant funds will be used for each project or activity.

Grant Agreement

Finally, counties must acknowledge and agree to the paragraph below before submitting an application:

By submitting this application for the Rural County Grant, the County acknowledges that funding for this fiscal year, and future grant funding, will be contingent upon proof of active involvement of the County Economic Opportunity Advisory Board required under Utah Code § 64N-4-803, timely reporting of the use and expenditure of grant funds for the prior year as required under Administrative Rules established for the program, and any other reporting, auditing, or post-performance requirements established by the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity in collaboration with the Rural Opportunity Advisory Committee. If the County fails to comply with any law applicable to the issuance of this grant money or makes any misrepresentation in this application, the State may, at its sole discretion, deny this application or future applications submitted by the County. Substantial lack of use of funds over consecutive years may result in application denial and withholding new grant funds until all previously awarded funds have been spent or encumbered.

Application Review

Applications will be reviewed by GOEO staff and the Rural Opportunity Advisory Committee.