

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 (RCG) 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 within the following categories:

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

Rural counties in the state of Utah of the third*, fourth, fifth, and sixth classes are eligible to apply for the RCG. 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 that 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 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.
- 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 July 31 each year.

APPLICATION

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

Each application must include a scope of work describing projects and activities that fit within the three categories described above. Applications also require 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 and how they will account for the use of grant funds.

Substantial unspent 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 align with the state's fiscal year, running from July 1 through 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.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

On or before July 31 of each year, a county that received an RCG in the previous fiscal year must provide a written report. Each CEO Board will assist and advise the county legislative body in preparing reporting requirements for grant money received. For a list of reporting requirements, please see Appendix D.

Counties must submit their annual reports before they can be considered for a new RCG. The Rural Opportunity Advisory Committee will be apprised of all annual reports submitted as a part of their program oversight responsibilities. For additional information regarding the Rural Opportunity Advisory Committee, see Appendix E.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Annual Reporting Portal Opens: May 15
- Annual Reporting Portal Closes: July 31, at 5 p.m. MDT
- New Fiscal-year Applications Open: As early as July 1, contingent on annual reporting compliance
- New Fiscal-year Applications Close: September 1, at 5 p.m. MDT
- Fund Distribution: Upon application approval, contracting, and invoice processing
- Grant Contract Term: July 1 of the 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 classes that create and maintain an active CEO Board, are eligible to apply for grants under the RCG. Rural counties by classification (State Code 17-50-501), are:

Counties of the third class (populations from 40,000 to 259,999)

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

Counties of the fourth class (populations from 12,000 to 39,999)

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

Counties of the fifth class (populations from 5,000 to 11,999)

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

Counties of the sixth class (populations less than 5,000)

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

*Counties of the third class are eligible for RCG if the county of the third class has no municipality with a population of 100,000 or more (63N-4-801(9)(b) (link to statute). Washington County, a third-class county, does not qualify for the RCG because it has a city with a population greater than 100,000.

Appendix B

County Economic Opportunity Advisory Board

Under Utah Code Subsection 63N-4-803(link to statute), a County Economic Opportunity Advisory Board (CEO Board) aids rural counties that seek to obtain an RCG. It is 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
- A member of the public who lives in the county

The county legislative body may also appoint additional members with expertise in economic development matters. The county legislative body is encouraged to consider gender and socioeconomic diversity when appointing members of the CEO Board.

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

- Applying for an RCG
- What projects should be funded by grant money provided to a rural county
- 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 Annotated Title 52, Chapter 4) (link to code). They are expected to abide by ethics in governance and all other requirements under OPMA(what is this? We need to spell it out).

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 consecutive terms.
 - b. The county legislative body shall adjust the length of terms to ensure that the terms of advisory board members appointed 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 serve for no more than two consecutive years.
3. The CEO Board shall elect a vice chair annually from among the advisory board members.
4. When a membership vacancy occurs 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

RCG Application Requirements

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 RCG 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 infrastructure, industrial building development, and capital facilities improvements for business development.

Deliverables and Outcomes

In a 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 a 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 itemizing the use of funds. An Excel spreadsheet template will be provided in the application for the proposed budget. Download the spreadsheet template, 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. Please include the completed spreadsheet in the application or your application will not be accepted.

Grant Agreement

Finally, counties must 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 GOEO 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, with assistance and advice from the Rural Opportunity Advisory Committee.

Appendix D

Rural County Grant Reporting Requirements

(Required by the Rural Opportunity Advisory Committee)

Each year, on or before July 31, a county 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 county, including:
 - Which companies or entities have utilized grant money.
 - How much grant money each company or entity has received.
 - How each company or entity has used the money.
- An evaluation of the effectiveness of awarded grants in improving economic development in the county, including:
 - Number of jobs created
 - Amount infrastructure created
 - Capital improvements in the county
- How much matching money has been utilized by the county and what entities or sources have provided the matching money.
- Any other reporting, auditing, or post-performance requirements established by the Center for Rural Development in collaboration with the advisory committee.

Appendix E

Responsibilities of the Rural Opportunity Advisory Committee

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

The Rural Opportunity Advisory Committee is made up of seven members appointed by the executive director of 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 under the Rural Opportunity Program. Grants to rural counties will address economic development needs, including:

- Business recruitment, development, and expansion
- Workforce training and development
- 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.
- Any deadlines that shall be met by a rural county when applying for a grant.