

Nebraska Department of Economic Development Microenterprise Technical Assistance Guidelines

The purpose of the microenterprise assistance program is to encourage and support the transfer of Nebraska-based technology and innovation in rural and urban areas of Nebraska in order to create high-growth, high technology businesses and to enhance creation of wealth and quality jobs.

Applications must be received by the Department no later than 5:00 PM on December 4, 2023.

The purpose of the microenterprise program is:

1. To encourage, support, and grow Nebraska-based microenterprises by providing technical assistance in rural and urban distressed areas in order to better assure that Nebraska's microenterprises are able to realize their full potential to create jobs, enhance entrepreneurial skills and activity, and increase low-income households' capacity to become self-sufficient, and:
2. To coordinate resources and technical assistance provided by microenterprise service providers in the State.

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants:

Eligible applicants include Internal Revenue Service (IRS) designated 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations located within the State of Nebraska. Such applicants must demonstrate statewide coverage of services to all areas of the State. Statewide coverage may be achieved through joint applications consisting of one Lead applicant and Joint applicant(s).

In joint applications, the Lead applicant must be a non-profit whose primary microenterprise service is micro-lending. In addition, the organization must also provide technical assistance to microenterprises consisting of businesses with 10 or fewer employees and further defined in the Business and Innovation Act. The Lead applicant must have a positive track record of micro-lending and technical assistance to microenterprises.

In addition to the Lead applicant, Joint applicant(s) must be an eligible micro-loan delivery or micro-loan technical assistance organization.

Eligible Projects

Eligible projects include funding for the operating costs of a micro-loan delivery program by a micro-loan technical assistance organization. Operating costs include costs to provide technical assistance to microenterprise businesses, such as: staff time, training costs, travel, and other costs deemed eligible by the Department.

Ineligible costs include: costs to hire staff above the baseline number of employees currently on staff at the time of application submission, loans to businesses, operating funds for organizations not serving as the Lead or Joint applicant(s), and other costs deemed ineligible by the Department.

Funding

The Department has committed a maximum of \$1,477,000 per year for the next two years to be awarded to one or more grantees (or joint applicants) to provide state-wide technical assistance. The maximum grant amount per project is \$1,477,000 per year for two years (\$2,954,000 total). Applications should reflect this two-year time frame. The amount of award will be determined based on the number of applications received and the scoring and ranking criteria of each application.

Any funds used for technical assistance costs for those organizations that are not the lead applicant may only be provided to Joint applicant(s). The amount of funding and proposed uses of funding for these costs must be clarified by the organization.

Matching Requirements

The awarded applicant is required to provide a match of no less than 35% of the total award amount requested. Funds shall be matched by non-state funds equivalent in money or in-kind contributions, or a combination of both. Such matching funds may be from any non-state source including private foundations, federal or local government sources, quasi-governmental entities, commercial lending institutions, or any other funds whose source does not include funds appropriated by the Nebraska Legislature.

Scoring Criteria

Applicants will be evaluated and scored on the following criteria:

- Ability to provide business training and technical assistance to microenterprise clients
- Partnerships with microenterprise lenders across the State
- Capacity of the organization and ability to monitor and provide quantitative results to the Department
- Percentage of grant funds leveraged/matched and the sources and sufficiency of operating funds matched
- Geographic location and the ability to provide timely assistance to microenterprise businesses throughout the State
- Plan for providing business development services and micro-loans to microenterprises
- Scope of services to be provided
- Plan for coordinating the services and loans provided by micro-loan delivery and technical assistance organizations with commercial lending institutions
- Sustainability of program efforts

Reporting Criteria

Awarded applicants will be required to submit an annual report to the Department following each contract program year. At a minimum, the annual report will include: update on program timeline and goals, number of businesses assisted, technical assistance provided, and other information requested by the Department.

DED CONTACT PERSON

For clarifications on this program, please direct your inquiries to:

Brad Kulwicki, Small Business Assistance Consultant | Business Development
Nebraska Department of Economic Development
205 Fallbrook Blvd, Suite 002
Lincoln, NE 68521
Cell: 402-480-9380
E-mail: bradley.kulwicki@nebraska.gov
Website: <http://opportunity.nebraska.gov>