



# North & South Omaha Recovery Grant Program State of Nebraska

September 2023 | 1.0

*This guidance document is advisory in nature but is binding on an agency until amended by such agency. A guidance document does not include internal procedural documents that only affect the internal operations of the agency and does not impose additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties or include confidential information or rules and regulations made in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act. If you believe that this guidance document imposes additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties, you may request a review of the document.*

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# 1 Introduction

This Program Manual is designed to provide guidance and written standards for the applicable components of the North & South Omaha Recovery Grant Program that utilizes funding from the Economic Recovery Contingency Fund as directed by the Nebraska State Legislature in LB 531 (2023).

This manual is designed to support you and your organization in utilizing leading practices, complying with funding requirements, achieving program goals, and successfully navigating the grant lifecycle.

The Manual includes the following:

1. Program Overview, including its goal and objectives
2. Eligibility Determination for Entity and Costs
3. Award and Potential Matching Requirements
4. Pre-Award, Application, and Submission, including application pre-requisites.
5. Award Determination and Obligation
6. Award Administration Information
7. Post-Award Management, including data reporting requirements
8. Technical Assistance for using Grants Management System

The Application and Program Manual, grant schedule, listing of prior awards, and other documents can be found at the North & South Omaha Recovery Grant Program webpage: <https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/programs/recovery/>.

## 2 Program Overview

The North & South Omaha Recovery Grant Program (NSORG) was designed to provide grants to public and private entities to respond to the negative impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency and to build resilient and innovative communities. NSORG was established by LB 531 of the State of Nebraska Legislature and signed into law by Governor Jim Pillen on June 6, 2023.

NSORG is authorized and further described within Neb. Rev. Stat. § 81-12,241.01. The Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) will provide grants to public and private entities to respond to the negative impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency and to build resilient and innovative communities.

### 2.1 Grant Schedules

#### GRANT SCHEDULE: Placemaking Infrastructure Grants

Grant Application Open Date	September 1, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. (Central Standard Time)
Grant Application Deadline	October 2, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. (Central Standard Time)
Anticipated Award Date	October 2023
Period of Performance	Funds must be expended before December 31, 2027

#### GRANT SCHEDULE: Small Business Support Grants

Grant Application Open Date	September 1, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. Central Standard Time)
Grant Application Deadline	December 31, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. (Central Standard Time)

Anticipated Award Date	Rolling
Period of Performance	Funds must be expended before December 31, 2027

GRANT SCHEDULE: Youth, Talent, & Workforce Development Grants	
Grant Application Open Date	September 8, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. (Central Standard Time)
Grant Application Deadline	October 9, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. (Central Standard Time)
Anticipated Award Date	October 2023
Period of Performance	Funds must be expended before December 31, 2027

GRANT SCHEDULE: RAPID Grants	
Grant Application Open Date	September 8, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. (Central Standard Time)
Grant Application Deadline	October 9, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. (Central Standard Time)
Anticipated Award Date	October 2023
Period of Performance	Funds must be expended before December 31, 2027

GRANT SCHEDULE: Sports & Tourism Grants	
Grant Application Open Date	To be announced by September 15, 2023
Grant Application Deadline	TBD – One Month After Open Date
Anticipated Award Date	November 2023
Period of Performance	Funds must be expended before December 31, 2027

GRANT SCHEDULE: Recovery Housing Grants	
Grant Application Open Date	To be announced by September 15, 2023
Grant Application Deadline	TBD – One Month After Open Date
Anticipated Award Date	November 2023
Period of Performance	Funds must be expended before December 31, 2027

## GRANT SCHEDULE: Entrepreneurship & Innovation Grants

Grant Application Open Date	To be announced by September 15, 2023
Grant Application Deadline	TBD – One Month After Open Date
Anticipated Award Date	November 2023
Period of Performance	Funds must be expended before December 31, 2027

## GRANT SCHEDULE: Arts, Culture, & Social Concerns Grants

Grant Application Open Date	To be announced by September 15, 2023
Grant Application Deadline	TBD – One Month After Open Date
Anticipated Award Date	November 2023
Period of Performance	Funds must be expended before December 31, 2027

## 2.2 Contact Information

Ryan ZimmerMas  
Lead Economic Recovery Program Manager  
Nebraska Department of Economic Development  
1313 Farnam St, Suite 202  
Omaha, NE 68102  
531-207-5020  
[ryan.zimmermas@nebraska.gov](mailto:ryan.zimmermas@nebraska.gov)

Lydia Lassen  
Economic Recovery Program Manager  
Nebraska Department of Economic Development  
1313 Farnam St, Suite 202  
Omaha, NE 68102  
531-893-1836  
[lydia.lassen@nebraska.gov](mailto:lydia.lassen@nebraska.gov)

Deisy Coyle  
Economic Recovery Program Manager  
Nebraska Department of Economic Development  
1313 Farnam St, Suite 202  
Omaha, NE 68102  
531-500-9577  
[deisy.coyle@nebraska.gov](mailto:deisy.coyle@nebraska.gov)

Abra Kataka  
Economic Recovery Program Manager  
Nebraska Department of Economic Development  
1313 Farnam St, Suite 202  
Omaha, NE 68102  
531-600-7044  
[abra.kataka@nebraska.gov](mailto:abra.kataka@nebraska.gov)

Assetina Kataka  
Economic Recovery Program Manager  
Nebraska Department of Economic Development  
1313 Farnam St, Suite 202  
Omaha, NE 68102  
402-840-0440  
[assetina.kataka@nebraska.gov](mailto:assetina.kataka@nebraska.gov)

## 3 Eligibility

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### 3.1 Eligible Use

Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 81-12,241.01(1)(a-b), The Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) will provide grants to public and private entities to respond to the negative impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency and to build resilient and innovative communities. Grants must relieve the negative impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency within a qualified census tract (QCT), or an economic redevelopment area (ERA) located within the boundaries of a city of the metropolitan class and to build resilient and innovative communities, with a priority on small business development, job creation, and economic development within such communities.

A **city of the metropolitan class** is defined by Neb. Rev. Stat. §14-101.

A **Qualified Census Tract (QCT)** is defined in 26 U.S.C. 42(d)(5)(B)(ii)(I), as such section existed on January 1, 2022. A map of QCTs can be found here:

<https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/programs/recovery/>

Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 81-12,240(1), **Economic Redevelopment Area (ERA)** means an area in the State of Nebraska in which:

- (A) the average rate of unemployment in the area during the period covered by the most recent federal decennial census or American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate by the United States Bureau of the Census is at least one hundred fifty percent of the average rate of unemployment in the state during the same period; and
- (B) The average poverty rate in the area is twenty percent or more for the federal census tract in the area.

A map of ERAs can be found here: <https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/programs/incentives/urban-redevelopment-act/>

### 3.2 Eligible Applicants

Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 81-12,241.01(1) (a-b), The North & South Omaha Recovery Grant Program grant application will be open to public and private entities. In addition, to be eligible for a grant under the NSORG, a project must be listed in the coordination plan or appendices by the Economic Recovery Special Committee of the Legislature dated January 10, 2023. A copy of the plan can be found here:

<https://www.nebraskalegislature.gov/reports/econrec.php>.

#### Maximum Number of Application Submissions:

- Each Applicant may apply for projects in one of the eight funding categories. If an Applicant submits the same project under more than one funding category, only the first application submitted will be considered for funding.
- No single organization will receive more than two (2) NSORG awards.
- **Universities and Colleges:** Each institution of higher education (IHE) may submit no more than one

application total across all NSORG funding categories. If an IHE submits more than one application, only the first application submitted will be considered for funding.

### Other Requirements

- Applicants applying for any project that is considered a sports park, recreation area, or athletic facility must apply in the “Sports & Tourism Grants” category. In addition, Applicants must either:
  - Be a city of the metropolitan class; or
  - Obtain a letter of support for the specific grant proposal from the mayor’s office of a city of the metropolitan class.
- **Qualified Census Tract Affordable Housing Program (QCT AHP) Recipients:** Projects already receiving American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds under the QCT AHP will not be considered.
- **Hall of Fame Museum (HOFM) Grant Program Recipients:** Any Awardee of the HOFM Grant is not eligible for NSORG funding.
- **Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) Grant Program Recipients:** Any Awardee of the FQHC Grant Program is not eligible for NSORG funding.

## 3.3 Funding Restrictions & Allowable Costs

All grant funds must be used for projects that respond to the negative impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency and to build resilient and innovative communities.

Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 81-12,241.01(1)(b)(ii), Applicants must explain how the grant will relieve the negative impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency within a QCT or ERA located within the boundaries of a city of the metropolitan class. Additionally, Applicants must explain how the grant will build resilient and innovative communities, with a priority on small business development, job creation, and economic development within a QCT or ERA located within the boundaries of a city of the metropolitan class.

### 3.3.1 Crosscutting Grant Funding Restrictions

#### Maximum Grant Amount

- Applications for NSORG funds may not exceed the amount requested for each respective project in the coordination plan or appendices of the Economic Recovery Special Committee of the Legislature dated January 10, 2023.
  - This restriction does not apply to projects that originally requested less than \$250,000. Such projects may request up to a maximum of \$250,000.
- Each recipient organization is limited to a maximum of two (2) NSORG awards.
- **Airport Business Park Planning Grant Recipients:** Any Awardee of the Airport Business Park Planning Grant may receive no more than \$10,000,000.00 in NSORG grant funds cumulatively across all NSORG awards.
- **Shovel-Ready Capital Investments Program Grant Recipients:** Any Awardee of the Shovel-Ready program may receive no more than \$2,000,000.00 in NSORG grant funds cumulatively across all NSORG awards.
- **Innovation Hubs (iHubs):** Any entity designated as an iHub may receive no more than \$10,000,000.00 in NSORG grant funds cumulatively across all NSORG awards.
- **SSBCI Awardees:** Any Awardee of the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) may receive no more than \$10,000,000.00 in NSORG grant funds cumulatively across all NSORG awards.

#### Ineligible Funding

- A project that predominantly involves street construction or repair to benefit vehicular traffic would be ineligible. Likewise, projects that predominantly involve streetscapes or water infrastructure are ineligible. A project that predominantly involves broadband infrastructure or access is ineligible. For the purpose of the NSORG program, *predominant* shall mean grant budget line items totaling 50% or more of the cost of the project.
- Uses of funds that do not respond to the negative economic impacts of the pandemic are ineligible.
- Funds may not be used to directly purchase or lure professional sports franchises.

- For-profit entities seeking to use grant funds to capitalize equity funds are not eligible.
- Expenses incurred prior to January 10, 2023, are not eligible. Funds will not be released without an agreed upon Award Agreement and Release of Funds notification.
- Projects involving displacement of individuals must comply with the Relocation Assistance Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 76-1214 to 76-1242. Projects that do not maintain compliance with Relocation Assistance Act are not eligible for funding.

### **Duplication of Funds:**

Applicants are required to avoid a duplication of benefits. A duplication of benefits occurs when the amount of the grant exceeds the total identified need. Applicant should conduct an analysis prior to applying for grant funding to determine needs not met by other sources. Listed below are some best practices to determine if there is a duplication of benefits.

#### Best Practices:

1. Identify assistance from federal and state government, county agencies, and private or nonprofit charity organizations that Applicant reasonably expects to be in a project, or any other funds reasonably expected to be or have been received.
2. All Applicants are required to identify other sources and amounts of covered assistance (sources and uses), and to certify that the grant funds requested does not duplicate other covered assistance that has been received or is reasonably expected to be received.
3. Applicants must agree to repay any assistance later received for the same purpose as the grant funds associated with this grant program.

### 3.3.2 Specific Funding Category Restrictions

Based on the coordination plan and appendices, dated January 10, 2023, DED has identified eight funding categories which respond to the negative impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency and to build resilient and innovative communities. Applicant may apply for projects in **one** of the eight funding categories. If an Applicant submits the same project under more than one funding category, only the first application submitted will be considered for funding.

Each funding category has specific threshold requirements and scoring criteria, which are detailed in this section. Please note that the minimum required economic score in each category is void for projects that were designated as catalyst projects or quick wins in the coordination plan dated January 10, 2023.

#### *i. Placemaking Infrastructure Grants*

Placemaking is about creating and revitalizing public spaces for people to live and work, through impactful projects that highlight community assets. These projects should improve quality of life for residents within QCTs/ERAs and attract visitors and new workforce to the area. Projects that promote improved health outcomes and public safety such as parks, recreation facilities, and programs that increase access to healthy foods are examples of Placemaking. Other eligible projects include projects that promote beautification, address food deserts, or are **multipronged** developments, meaning one project combines elements spanning multiple other NSORG categories (e.g., housing, small businesses, and workforce development). Placemaking projects are vital components of a community's workforce attraction and retention strategy. Placemaking projects also respond to the negative economic impacts of COVID-19 on those disproportionately impacted. This funding category will assist in the development of regionally significant quality of life projects that leverage local area and community assets. Job creation will be prioritized in scoring applications.

Applicants applying for a Placemaking Infrastructure Grant must either:

- Be a city of the metropolitan class; or
- Obtain a letter of support for the specific grant proposal from the Mayor's office of a city of the metropolitan class.

Nonprofit organizations *must* be the lead recipients for any placemaking infrastructure project that involves an **arena** or **community center**. An arena is defined as a place where sports, entertainment, and other public events take place. A community center is defined as a place where people from a particular community can meet for social, educational, or recreational activities.



Projects located within one of the four geographic areas of focus, as defined in the coordination plan, will be prioritized.

Furthermore, eligible applicants must meet each the following criteria:

- Project must have received an economic score of 0.25 or greater in the coordination plan and appendices.
  - Projects that were designated as catalyst projects or quick wins in the coordination plan dated January 10, 2023, are exempt from this minimum economic impact score requirement.
- Project must meet at least one of the following requirements:
  - Project promotes improved health outcomes and public safety such as parks, recreation facilities.
  - Project increases access to healthy foods.
  - Project relates to beautification of the built environment.
  - Project addresses food deserts.
  - Project is a multipronged development, meaning the project combines elements spanning multiple other NSORG categories (e.g., housing, small businesses, and workforce development).
  - Project requested \$30,000,000.00 or more grant funds in coordination plan and appendices.

Grants may be awarded up to the amount of the request.

#### *ii. Small Business Support Grants*

Small business and entrepreneurs play a vital role in the thriving economy of Nebraska. The needs presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic fallout have imposed substantial repercussions upon small business entities within the North and South Omaha communities, with disproportionate impacts for small businesses within Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs) and/or Economic Redevelopment Areas (ERAs).

In this funding category, eligible applicants are for-profit small businesses in QCTs and/or ERAs within a city of the metropolitan class. DED will contact ALL qualifying applicants directly and provide information on how to apply. Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 81-12,241.01(1)(b)(i), beneficiary small businesses must be expressly listed in the coordination plan or appendices by the Economic Recovery Special Committee of the Legislature dated January 10, 2023.

To ensure transparency and a fair evaluation process, Small Business Support Grants (SBSG) operate with and unique approach. Unlike other programs, SBSG will not be scored in the traditional manner. Instead, all eligible applicants included in the coordination plan and appendices will have an opportunity to participate. Applications submitted under Small Business Support Program will undergo an Economic Impact Analysis, which will be conducted to determine the appropriate funding amount for each business.

To be eligible under the Small Business Support category, small businesses must fulfill the minimum criteria:

- The applicants must meet the definition of a small business as defined by the Small Business Administration (SBA): <https://www.sba.gov/blog/does-your-small-business-qualify>
- The business must function as profit-generating entities operating in the State of Nebraska.
- DED will formally invite ALL eligible businesses to apply, and this process will involve interviews with qualifying enterprises in order to conduct an economic impact analysis. As such, Small Business Support Grant applications will not be competitively scored, but rather will be awarded to each business that qualifies for the amount offered by DED.

Furthermore, DED strongly encourages all businesses that meet the required criteria to explore the possibility of obtaining tax credits through the Urban Redevelopment Act (URA) before utilizing the granted funds for investment. For additional information, visit <https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/programs/incentives/urban-redevelopment-act/>

Grants may be awarded up to a maximum of \$10,000,000.00 per Applicant.

### *iii. Youth, Talent, and Workforce Development Grants*

Attracting, retaining, and developing a diverse and highly qualified workforce not only benefits the local economies of Nebraska's communities, it also secures better opportunities for individuals who experienced a reduction in hours, job loss, or other negative economic impacts due to the COVID-19 public health crisis. Programs targeting high wage, high growth, and high demand (H3) jobs will be prioritized in selection. Projects aimed at youth, talent attraction, and workforce development may include the following non-exhaustive list of eligible uses:

- Assistance to individuals who want and are available for work;
- Scholarship programs;
- Job training;
- Public jobs programs and fairs;
- Support for childcare and transportation to and from a jobsite or interview;
- Programs that increase funding for childcare providers to ensure that local childcare services are accessible, affordable, and of high-quality;
- Incentives for newly employed workers;
- Subsidized employment;
- Grants to hire underserved workers;
- Assistance to unemployed individuals to start small businesses; or
- Development of job and workforce training centers.

Applicants are encouraged to partner with an Institution of Higher Education (IHE), public school district, or corporation with at least 200 employees. Such partnerships will be prioritized in scoring of applications.

Youth, Talent, and Workforce Development Applicants must meet each of the following criteria in order to be considered for grant funding:

- Project must have received an economic score of 2.00 or greater in the coordination plan and appendices.
  - In addition to projects that were designated as catalyst projects or quick wins in the coordination plan dated January 10, 2023, scholarship programs are exempt from this minimum economic impact score requirement

Grants may be awarded up to a maximum of \$5,000,000.00 per award.

### *iv. RAPID Grants*

Eligible nonprofit organizations may apply for a grant under the Recovery Assistance Program for Immediate Distribution ("RAPID"). RAPID grants are limited to \$2,000,000.00 per project and are intended to fund smaller projects that will have large impact. Due to the nature of such smaller projects, Applicants must explain how they will quickly utilize grant funds to make an impact within a short period of time from award date. RAPID Grant requests of more than \$2,000,000.00 will not be considered.

RAPID grants applications will not be competitively scored. Rather, a nonprofit organization whose project was recommended for funding of less than or equal to \$2,000,000.00 in the coordination plan dated January 10, 2023 may apply for a RAPID grant. Only projects that were designated as catalyst projects or quick wins in the coordination plan were recommended for funding. If the organization requests less than or equal to the amount that was recommended for funding in the coordination plan and meets all other threshold eligibility requirements, the grant request will be funded up to the amount of the request, at the discretion of the Department.

Nonprofit organizations that received a funding recommendation in the coordination plan of greater than \$2,000,000.00 may elect to apply in the RAPID round, provided their request to DED totals less than or equal to \$2 million. While such organizations forfeit the ability to request any amount over \$2 million from any NSORG grant, RAPID may offer an opportunity for organizations to access grant funds more quickly and begin their projects on an expedited timeline.

A possible subsequent round of RAPID grants may provide nonprofit organizations that did not receive a funding recommendation in the coordination plan an opportunity to receive technical assistance and/or operating support to further their impact in QCTs and/or ERAs. Details regarding the possible second round of RAPID grants will be

provided at a later date.

Grants may be awarded up to a maximum of \$2,000,000.00 per award.

*v. Sports & Tourism Grants*

Public and private entities may apply for grants that support the sports and/or tourism industry in this funding category. Applicants must explain how their project will benefit the sports and/or tourism industry within QCTs and/or ERAs in a city of the metropolitan class.

Applicants applying for any project that is considered a sports park, recreation area, or athletic facility must either:

- Be a city of the metropolitan class; or
- Obtain a letter of support for the specific grant proposal from the Mayor's office of a city of the metropolitan class.

In addition, Applicants applying for Sports & Tourism grants must apply for a project which received an economic score of greater than or equal to 2.00 in the coordination plan.

- Note: Projects that were designated as catalyst projects or quick wins in the coordination plan dated January 10, 2023, are exempt from this minimum economic impact score requirement.

Grants may be awarded up to a maximum of \$10,000,000.00 per award.

*vi. Recovery Housing Grants*

Applicants for Recovery Housing Grants should identify gaps in the local housing ecosystem and unmet needs in publicly funded grant programs to leverage truly innovative solutions. This housing funding category represents an opportunity to think outside of the box and pilot new, sustainable solutions to local housing shortages and deteriorating housing stock. Applicants must also demonstrate that the project could **not** be served by existing federal housing programs administered by the Housing Division of DED or the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Projects already receiving American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds under the Qualified Census Tract Affordable Housing Program (QCT AHP) are **not** eligible for NSORG funding and will **not** be considered.

Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 81-12,241.01(1)(a), NSORG funds must be provided to recipients as **grants**. The Economic Recovery Division of the Department of Economic Development has no authority to structure Recovery Housing Grants as forgivable loans. As such, for-profit Applicants are encouraged to consult legal counsel for advice on tax implications of directly receiving grant funds.

Recovery Housing Applicants must meet each of the following criteria in order to be considered for grant funding:

- Project must have received an economic score of greater than or equal to 2.00 in the coordination plan.
  - Projects that were designated as catalyst projects or quick wins in the coordination plan dated January 10, 2023, are exempt from this minimum economic impact score requirement.
- Projects must be located in Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs) and/or Economic Redevelopment Areas (ERAs).

Grants may be awarded up to a maximum of \$10,000,000.00 per award.

*vii. Entrepreneurship & Innovation Grants*

Entrepreneurs are essential contributors to economic growth and job creation. The adverse impacts of the COVID-19 public health crisis and subsequent economic downturn have posed numerous challenges for entrepreneurs, particularly those in the North and South Omaha communities. Furthermore, entrepreneurs within Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs) and/or Economic Redevelopment Areas (ERAs) have been disproportionately affected. In this funding category, DED will prioritize eligible organizations that form partnerships with an iHub, Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), or Institution of Higher Education (IHE).

These collaborations aim to execute projects specifically designed to assist entrepreneurs in QCTs and/or ERAs within the metropolitan class. The primary objectives of these projects are to facilitate their development, recovery,

growth, and resilience, enabling them to withstand future economic downturns. The eligible project activities encompass a diverse range of creative endeavors, including but not limited to:

- Delivery of loans or grants to entrepreneurs.
- Offering technical assistance, business incubators, and grants to support start-up or expansion costs for small business.
- Provision of support for microbusinesses, encompassing financial assistance, childcare provisions, and transportation subsidies.
- Delivery of technical assistance, counseling, and additional services to support business planning and capacity building.
- Facilitation of assistance programs targeted at individuals seeking to establish their own small business.

It is important to note that the aforementioned project categories are not exhaustive, and other relevant initiatives may also be considered for funding within this framework.

Entrepreneurship & Innovation Applicants must meet each of the following criteria in order to be considered for grant funding:

- Project must have received an economic score of greater than or equal to 2.00 in the coordination plan.
  - Projects that were designated as catalyst projects or quick wins in the coordination plan dated January 10, 2023, are exempt from this minimum economic impact score requirement.
- Beneficiary entrepreneurs must be located within a QCT and/or ERA in a city of the metropolitan class.
  - *Beneficiaries* may not apply directly to DED for an Entrepreneurship & Innovation Grant; only *organizations* carrying out eligible project activities will be considered for funding by DED.

Grants may be awarded up to a maximum of \$5,000,000.00 per award.

**Innovation hub** or **iHub** means a private nonprofit corporation that is designated by the Director of DED as an iHub.

**Community Development Financial Institution** or **CDFI** means an institution defined as so by the U.S. Department of Treasury.

**Institutions of Higher Education** or **IHE** means an educational institution that provides post-secondary education, such as colleges, universities, community colleges, and vocational or trade schools.

#### *viii. Arts, Culture, & Social Assistance Grants*

Projects that predominantly focus on promoting the arts and humanities or provide social assistance to beneficiary individuals and households in QCTs or ERAs must apply under this funding category. For the purpose of the NSORG program, predominant shall mean grant budget line items totaling 50% or more of the cost of the project.

Arts, Culture, and Social Assistance grant applications will not be competitively scored. Rather, an organization whose project was recommended for funding and designated as a catalyst or quick win project in the coordination plan dated January 10, 2023 may apply for an Arts, Culture, & Social Assistance grant. If the organization requests less than or equal to the amount that was recommended for funding in the coordination plan and meets all other threshold eligibility requirements, the grant request will be funded up to the amount of the request, at the discretion of DED.

Grants may be awarded up to the amount of the request.

### 3.4 Award

Grants will be awarded for amounts up to the amount requested. Maximum grant amounts for each funding category can be found in Section 3.3.2.

## 4 Pre-Award and Application Submission

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### 4.1 Pre-Award

The following action(s) are required prior to the submission of an application for this program.

#### 4.1.1 Bank Account

DED will require all Recipients to establish a distinct bank account exclusively for the management of the grant funds. By doing so, a clear distinction is established between the grant funds and other financial assets, ensuring proper financial management in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. This dedicated account enhances transparency, facilitates accurate record-keeping, and demonstrates responsible stewardship of the grant resources.

#### 4.1.2 Debarment and Suspension

Applicants and any partners that are debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from state or federal assistance programs or activities are ineligible for this program.

Additionally, during the application process, Applicants and partners must disclose information about any and all proceedings involving the entity, its principles, or employees that are ongoing or reached final disposition within the most recent 10-years that:

1. Is or was in connection with the award or performance of a grant, cooperative agreement, or procurement Award Agreement from the State of Nebraska of the Federal Government; or
2. Is one of the following:
  - a. A criminal proceeding that resulted in a conviction under verdict or plea;
  - b. A civil proceeding that resulted in a finding of fault and liability and payment of a monetary fine, penalty, reimbursement, restitution, or damages;
  - c. An administrative proceeding that resulted in a finding of fault and liability and your payment of a fine, penalty, reimbursement, restitution, or damages;
  - d. A bankruptcy proceeding; or
  - e. Any other criminal, civil, or administrative proceeding if:
    - (i) It could have led to an outcome described in paragraph 2(a)-(c) of this subsection;
    - (ii) It had a different disposition arrived at by consent or compromise with or without an acknowledgment of fault on your part; and
    - (iii) This requirement to disclose information about the proceeding does not conflict with applicable laws and regulations.

Failure to disclose may result in Applicant being determined ineligible for this program.

#### 4.1.3 Acknowledgement of Terms and Conditions for State Grants

Recipient must attest to DED in the grant application and award agreement that funds will only be utilized for activities allowed under the state grant.

The Recipient must acknowledge and will agree to in the grant application and award agreement that any activities performed by the Recipient determined to be unallowable by DED, State Oversight Monitors, or Auditors must be returned to the DED.

### 4.2 Application Submission

Applications are submitted electronically through DED's Grant Management System at any time after the application live date and on or before the application due date.

#### 4.2.1 Documentation Required for Application – Content & Forms

To successfully apply, you will need to complete all required fields and sections of the applications. Applicants may view the application at the program webpage – <https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/programs/recovery/>

Applications will have the following sections:

- Opportunity Details
- Project Information
- Forms
- Budget

- Performance Plan

Applicants must provide the following, as applicable:

- Current copy of Articles of Incorporation or Certification of Organization
- Current copy of By-Laws
- Nebraska Secretary of State - Certificate of Good Standing
- Evidence of Board Approval for grant request
- Letter from IRS of 501(c) designation (if applicable)
- 2020-2022 IRS Form 990 (if applicable)
- Letter(s) of support, if applicable
- 2020-2022 Income Statements, Cash Flow, and Balance Statements (private entities)
- Other Applicant-specific attachments, as needed

#### 4.2.2 Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

Applications must be submitted by the Application Deadline indicated in Section 2.1. Applications must be completed via DED’s GMS and must fully comply with all requirements within the time period specified. Applications that do not include all of the documentation or attachments required or have not been fully completed, will not be considered. At its discretion, DED may request supplemental materials from Applicants. Please utilize links and other information found in Section 8 of this document to assist with your application submission.

#### 4.3 Conflicts of Interest in the Administration of Awards

Recipient must disclose to the DED any financial conflicts of interest that arise and are required to be managed during the life of the award. Such a conflict of interest would arise when the employee of Recipient or any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for an Award Agreement. Recipient employees may neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from the Award Agreement or be parties to Award Agreement.

## 5 Award Determination and Obligation

### 5.1 Application Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be scored and evaluated using the following criteria:

Criteria	Description	Weighting Factor
Capacity	The ability of the Applicant to complete the program activities within the program period of performance and efficient and effective use of funds.	6.67%
Financial and Administrative Readiness	Experience of the Applicant in managing grant funds and developing program internal controls, established procurement processes, and adhering to reporting requirements.	6.67%
Legislative Priorities	Project’s alignment with LB 531’s strategic priorities. Catalyst Projects, as classified in the coordination plan, will receive first priority, followed by projects listed in the coordination plan.	30.00%
Community & Economic Impact	Description of project’s ability to meet community needs. Project’s economic impact and evaluation plan. Projects located within a Geographic Area of Focus will receive extra points.	25.00%
Readiness & Sustainability	Feasibility of project timeline, budget, and sustainability.	10.00%
Program-Specific	In addition to the program-wide scoring criteria above, each project category will award points based on category-specific criteria.	21.67%



**Grant applications for the following funding categories will not be competitively scored.**

- **RAPID Grants:** RAPID Grants will be awarded to all applicants that meet the crosscutting grant funding restrictions in Section 3.3.1 and specific funding category restrictions outlined in Section 3.3.2.
- **Small Business Support Grants:** To ensure transparency and a fair evaluation process, Small Business Support Grants (SBSG) operate with a unique approach. Unlike other programs, SBSG will not be scored in the traditional manner. Instead, all eligible applicants included in the coordination plan and appendices will have an opportunity to participate. Applications submitted under Small Business Support Program will undergo an Economic Impact Analysis, which will be conducted to determine the appropriate funding amount for each business.
- **Arts, Culture, & Social Assistance Grants:** Arts, Culture, & Social Assistance Grants will be awarded to all Applicants that meet the crosscutting grant funding restrictions in Section 3.3.1 and specific funding category restrictions outlined in Section 3.3.2.

## 5.2 Applicant Risk Assessment

DED will perform a risk assessment to identify the potential risks associated with this particular award and address those risks by including mitigating terms and conditions in the Award Agreement as well as additional Recipient monitoring procedures for grantees requiring special conditions. This process differs based on the potential Recipient’s organization type (ex. nonprofit, for-profit business, academic institution). The risk assessment will be performed by collecting and reviewing information about the organization and assigning an appropriate risk level.

## 5.3 Application Review and Selection Process

Applications will be evaluated to determine if they meet eligibility criteria and minimum qualifications. Applications that do not pass this threshold review will be disqualified from further consideration. Applications that pass threshold review will be scored by a committee based on the scoring criteria below. Awards will be determined by the review committee.

Characteristic	Criteria
<b>I. Capacity</b>	
	Organization’s overall track record.
	Qualifications and experience of organization’s staff & external partners.
	Track record of completing projects on time or ahead of schedule.
	Organization’s ability to take on additional projects.
<b>II. Financial and Administrative Readiness</b>	
	Description of organization’s internal controls and financial management procedures.
	Organization’s ability to manage state funds in a responsible manner.
<b>III. Legislative Priorities</b>	
	Project’s alignment with LB 531’s strategic priorities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small business development</li> <li>• Job Creation</li> <li>• Economic Development</li> </ul>
	Community Benefit & Innovation: Ability of project to build resilient and innovative communities.
	Project’s response to the negative economic impacts of Covid-19.
	BONUS: Projects classified as Catalyst Projects by the Coordination Plan of the

	Economic Recovery Special Committee of the Legislature will receive bonus points. Other projects listed in the coordination plan will receive second priority.
<b>IV. Community &amp; Economic Impact</b>	
	Description of project's ability to meet community needs.
	Project's alignment with visioning workshops conducted by Economic Recovery Special Committee of the Legislature.
	Project's economic impact score, as reported in Appendix F: Economic Impact Evaluation Report of the North and South Omaha Economic Recovery Coordination Plan.
	Additional economic impact evaluation, based on jobs and future tax receipts.
	Quality of outcome measurement plan.
	BONUS: Project is within a Geographic Area of Focus, as defined in the Coordination Plan.
	BONUS: Use of contractors from within QCTs and/or ERAs
<b>V. Readiness, Financing &amp; Sustainability</b>	
	Feasibility of project timeline.
	Project budget: Narrative justification of total grant request. Quality and robustness of grant budget, showing use of grant funds.
	Financial sustainability
<b>In addition to the program-wide scoring criteria above, each project category will award points based on category-specific criteria.</b>	
<b>Placemaking Infrastructure</b>	
	The project fits program objectives as shown through clearly defined goals, which includes a comprehensive framework outlining actionable tasks, key strategies, and desired outcomes.
	The project intends to improve the quality of life for residents within QCTs/ERAs by addressing the needs of the community.
	The project will lead to job creation in QCTs/ERAs, with an emphasis on permanent jobs.
<b>Small Business Support Grants</b>	<b>Small Business Support Grants will not be competitively scored.</b>
<b>Youth, Talent, &amp; Workforce</b>	
	Programs targeting high wage, high growth, and high demand (H3) jobs will be prioritized in selection.
	Priority: Programs that demonstrate partnerships with an Institution of Higher Education (IHE), public school district, or corporation with at least 200 employees.
<b>RAPID Grants</b>	<b>RAPID Grants will not be competitively scored.</b>
<b>Sports &amp; Tourism</b>	



<b>Grants</b>	
	Project's ability to benefit the sports and/or tourism industry within QCTs and/or ERAs in a city of the metropolitan class.
	Project's ability to attract visitors to QCTs and/or ERAs.
<b>Recovery Housing Grants</b>	
	Capacity – The project demonstrates a well-defined plan of action and strategy that will be executed soon after the grant is awarded.
	Innovative – The project leverages innovative solutions to identify gaps in the local housing ecosystem and identify unmet needs in publicly funded grants programs.
	Target Population – the project addresses the unique needs, circumstances, and aspirations of the target community in which the project will serve.
<b>Entrepreneurship &amp; Innovation Grants</b>	
	Project Alignment: The extended to which the proposed projects align with the goals and objectives of the program, demonstrating a clear connection to fostering entrepreneurship, innovation and economic growth.
	Innovation and Creativity: The level of innovation and creativity demonstrated by the proposed project, considering the uniqueness of the approaches, methodologies, or solutions being employed to address the challenges faced by entrepreneurs and promote their success.
	Scalability and Potential for Impact: The potential for the proposed projects to scale and have a significant impact on the target population and the broader entrepreneurship ecosystem, fostering job creation, economic development and sustainable growth.
	Collaboration and partnerships: The degree of collaboration and partnerships established by the applicant with relevant stakeholder, such as iHubs, CDFIs, IHEs, industry experts, or community organization, to leverage expertise, resources, and networks for the successful implementation and long-term sustainability of the projects.
<b>Arts, Culture, &amp; Social Assistance Grants</b>	<b>Arts, Culture, &amp; Social Assistance Grants will not be competitively scored.</b>

Following the award decision by the review committee, a recommendation will be provided to the DED Director. Once approved, notices of award and notices of non-select will be sent to the Applicants.

## 6 Award Administration

### 6.1 Notice of Award

DED issues written Notices of Award (NOA) to Recipient of an award. The NOA will outline the anticipated grant amount. These funds will be reserved for the potential Recipient until the grant agreement is signed by both DED and the Recipient or until such time it is determined that a grant agreement cannot be entered between Recipient and DED.

### 6.2 Grant Agreement Terms and Conditions

Following DED's NOA, DED issues an electronic copy of the North & South Omaha Recovery Grant Program Award Agreement via DocuSign. The North & South Omaha Recovery Grant Program Award Agreement is entered into between DED and the Recipient. If the Recipient is an organization or other legal entity, an authorized representative of the Recipient must sign the Award Agreement.

The Recipient must review, sign, date, and return the agreement via DocuSign to accept North & South Omaha Recovery Grant Program awards. DED signs the Award Agreement after it is signed by the Recipient. Once all parties have signed the agreement, Recipient will be required to provide the [State of Nebraska W-9 and ACH Enrollment Form](#).

Unless otherwise directed, the executed agreement and any special conditions will be available within the GMS, under Tools > Documents.

Recipient must attest to DED in the grant application and award agreement that funds will only be utilized for activities allowed under the state grant program.

The Recipient must acknowledge and will agree to in the grant application and agreement that any activities performed by the Recipient determined to be unallowable by DED, or State Oversight Monitors or Auditors must be returned to the DED for utilization on other allowable activities.

### 6.3 Award Disbursement

Upon full execution of the Award Agreement and the meeting of any required conditions specified in the Award Agreement, the Recipient must submit the First Payment Request.

The Recipient must submit the First Payment Request using the GMS as an advance payment of up to 50% of the total awarded amount, as pre-determined by your Award Agreement.

Upon DED's approval of the First Payment Request, DED will disburse the funding. Subsequent funding will be provided on a monthly basis. Recipient can find detailed instructions for how to submit payment requests in the user guides and other information found in Section 8 of this document.

Funds are transferred electronically to the account designated on the State of Nebraska ACH Enrollment Form which must be submitted with the signed Grant Agreement. If an email address was provided on the State of Nebraska ACH Enrollment Form, it will be notified once the payment has been processed.

All uses of grant funds will be reported to DED by logging expenses in the GMS. To record expenses, the Recipient must create one expense for each supporting document. Proof of payment must also be included on each expense. Expenses will be tracked against the Recipient's budget line items. The Recipient will then compile all expenses into a monthly Budget Reporting Period, which will be submitted to DED.

DED may reject the monthly Budget Reporting Period and require resubmission if documentation is incomplete, funds are requested for ineligible costs, match contribution is not sufficient, or other issues are identified. Approval of each monthly Budget Reporting Period is subject to Recipient's submission of supporting documentation and proof of payments for review and approval by DED.

"Supporting documentation" includes receipts, invoices, timesheets, etc., with sufficient information to demonstrate the amount of the cost and the allowability, applicability, and reasonableness of the cost.

"Proof of Payment" means canceled checks, bank statement, confirmation of wire or automated clearing house transfer, or similar documentation which provides substantiating evidence that payment has been made as claimed.

Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 81-12,241.01(4), DED may reject or reduce the amount of a payment request if the recipient does not submit monthly Budget Reporting Period in a timely manner demonstrating that grant funds are being used for the authorized purpose of the grant program.

DED will issue final payment to each Recipient on or before December 31, 2027, less any funds that have not been used for the authorized purpose of the grant program. If a Recipient does not use the grant funds already paid for the authorized purpose of the program, DED may require such Recipient to return such unused grant funds upon a documented finding that such funds have not been used.

## 7 Post-Award Management and Implementation

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### 7.1 Financial Management

Recipients are required to properly manage their financial resources. DED requires that Recipient maintain a financial management framework that allows for the appropriate recording and reporting of the receipt and expenditures of grant funds in accordance with all Nebraska state laws. A financial management system includes maintaining records that document compliance with state statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Award Agreement, data must be sufficient to permit the preparation of reports required by general and program-specific terms and conditions, and the tracing of funds to a level of expenditures adequate to establish that such funds have been used according to the state statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Award Agreement.

### 7.2 Internal Controls

Recipient must establish and maintain effective internal controls over the state award that provides reasonable assurance that the Recipient is managing the award in compliance with state statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Award Agreement, including but not limited to, taking prompt action when instances of noncompliance are identified including noncompliance identified in audit findings and taking reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other information DED or Recipient designates as sensitive consistent with applicable state and local regarding privacy and responsibility over confidentiality.

### 7.3 Cost Sharing and Matching

DED will not require Recipients to report on cost sharing or matching for this grant program.

### 7.4 Insurance

The Recipient will be required to maintain insurance, at its own expense, and provide a Certificate of Insurance. Insurance coverage will be set by DED and based off the scope of the Recipient's grant program.

### 7.5 Conflicts of Interest

No officer, employee, or agent of the Recipient will participate in the selection, or the award or administration of an Award Agreement supported by the grant if a conflict of interest, real or perceived, would be involved. Such a conflict would arise when the officer, employee, or agent; any member of the immediate family of the officer, employee, or agent; any partner of the officer, employee, or agent; or any organization which employs or is about to employ any of the above has a financial or other interest in the firm selected for award.

Recipient's officers, employees, or agents will neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from Award Agreement or, potential Award Agreement, or parties to sub-agreements during office tenure or for one year after the closeout of any project financed with the grant funds. This stipulation must be included in all other Award Agreements and sub-agreements related to projects financed with grant funds.

In the event a prohibited conflict of interest arises, the Recipient must immediately inform DED. Upon written request, exceptions may be granted by the DED on a case-by-case basis when it is determined that such an exception will serve to further the purposes of the Program.

### 7.6 Registration Requirements

The Recipient or subgrantees must be authorized to transact business in the State of Nebraska and are expected to comply with all Nebraska Secretary of State and Department of Revenue registration requirements, including any

registration requirements pertaining to types of business entities (e.g., person, partnership, foreign/domestic limited liability company, association, or foreign/domestic corporation). Construction agreements are expected to meet all applicable requirements of the Nebraska Award Agreement or Registration Act and provide a current, valid certificate of registration to the Recipient for the Recipient's records.

Upon request, the Recipient must submit copies of written agreements executed between the Recipient and any subgrantees or Award Agreement or relating to any projects financed with grant funds.

## 7.7 Cost Principles

Recipient must assume responsibilities for administering state funds in a manner consistent with underlying agreements, program objectives, and the terms and conditions of the state awards. Costs pertaining to the state award should be allowable, allocable, and reasonable and treated consistently.

A cost is allowable if it is permitted as a cost within general state regulations and/or the terms of the Award Agreement. Costs expressly unallowable or mutually agreed to be unallowable should be identified and excluded from any billing, claim, invoice, or proposal related to the Award Agreement. Inclusion of an unallowable cost in an invoice does not make the cost allowable. Adding a justification to an unallowable cost in an invoice also does not make the cost allowable.

A cost is allocable to a particular Award Agreement if the goods or services involved can be directly charged to the Award Agreement based on the benefit provided.

A cost is considered reasonable if the nature of the goods or services, and the price paid for the goods or services, reflects the action that a prudent person would have taken given the prevailing circumstances at the time the decision to incur the cost was made.

A cost is treated consistently when all costs are incurred for the same purpose and in like circumstances are treated uniformly either as direct costs or as indirect costs.

## 7.8 Records Retention and Access

Recipient must maintain records and financial documents for five years after all funds have been expended or returned. Wherever practicable, such records should be collected, transmitted, and stored in open and machine-readable formats. Recipient must agree to provide or make available such records to the State of Nebraska, or the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

## 7.9 Noncompliance Termination

If DED determines that the grantee materially fails to comply with any term of this grant agreement, whether stated in a state statute or regulation, an assurance, in a state plan or application, a notice of award, or any other applicable requirement, DED, in its sole discretion may take actions including:

1. Temporarily withholding payments pending correction of the deficiency or more severe enforcement action by DED;
2. Disallowing or denying use of funds for all or part of the cost of the activity or action not in compliance;
3. Disallowing claims for reimbursement;
4. Wholly or partially suspending or terminating this grant;
5. Requiring return or offset of previous reimbursements;
6. Prohibiting the grantee from applying for or receiving additional funds for other grant programs administered by DED until repayment to DED is made and any other compliance or audit finding is satisfactorily resolved;
7. Reducing the grant award maximum liability of DED;
8. Terminating this Grant Agreement;
9. Imposing a corrective action plan;

10. Withholding further awards; or
11. Taking other remedies or appropriate actions.

The Recipient costs resulting from obligations incurred during a suspension or after termination of this grant are not allowable unless DED expressly authorizes them in the notice of suspension or termination or subsequently. DED, at its sole discretion, may impose sanctions without first requiring a corrective action plan.

## 7.10 Reporting

### 7.10.1 Financial Reporting Requirements

All Recipient must complete and submit financial reports as required by the North & South Omaha Recovery Grant Program Award Agreement. Expenditures may be reported on a cash or accrual basis, as long as the methodology is disclosed and consistently applied.

### 7.10.2 Program Performance Reporting Requirements

All Recipient must complete and submit performance reports as required by the North & South Omaha Recovery Grant Program Award Agreement.

## 7.11 Annual Audit Report

The Recipient must have an annual audit of all of its financial records conducted by an independent certified public accountant at the Recipient's cost.

## 7.12 Department of Economic Development Monitoring and Reporting

DED is entrusted with the responsibility for the management, disbursement, and accountability of the North & South Omaha Recovery Grant Program. This responsibility extends to managing risks associated with the grants management process to facilitate efficient operation and compliance with regulatory and programmatic requirements. Monitoring and reporting are critical. DED must have up-to-date information on awards, and it is equally important for Recipients to meet performance goals and ensure compliance with applicable rules and regulations.

### **Recipient will:**

- Be responsible for oversight of the operations of the state award-supported activities;
- Monitor its activities performed under the state award to ensure compliance with applicable state requirements and performance expectations are being achieved. Monitoring will cover each program, function and activity;
- Submit performance report for each open project to DED within 15 days of the reporting period end date, which will include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - Information indicated in the Performance Report section above.
  - Comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives of the state award established for the period. Where the accomplishments of the state award can be quantified, a computation of the cost.
  - The reason for not meeting established goals, if appropriate; and
  - Additional pertinent information including, when appropriate, analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high cost units;
- Inform DED if the following occur between performance reporting dates:
  - Problems, delays, or adverse conditions which will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the state award. This disclosure must include a statement of the action taken, or contemplated, and assistance needed to resolve the situation and;
  - Favorable developments which enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned; and
  - Submit annual audit to DED, as indicated above.

# 8 Technical Assistance for Using the Grants Management System

To administer this program, DED uses its GMS known as AmpliFund. Applications will be submitted, and awards will be managed through the GMS.

## 8.1 DED Help Portal

User guides about DED's specific business processes for accessing and using the GMS to apply and facilitate the grant are available on DED's website, <http://opportunity.nebraska.gov/amplifund/>. The help portal is organized by topic. You can enter key words into the search bar to find specific articles.



### 8.1.1 Application User Guides

For instructions on registering to apply, please see **User Management** (<https://dednebraska.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/categories/7865709789851-User-Management>).

For instructions on applying through the GMS, please see **How to Apply** (<https://dednebraska.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/categories/7542920001051-How-to-Apply>).

### 8.1.2 Award User Guides

For initial instructions on managing your award, please see **Getting Started with your Award** (<https://dednebraska.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/categories/7865773985307-Getting-Started-with-your-Award>).

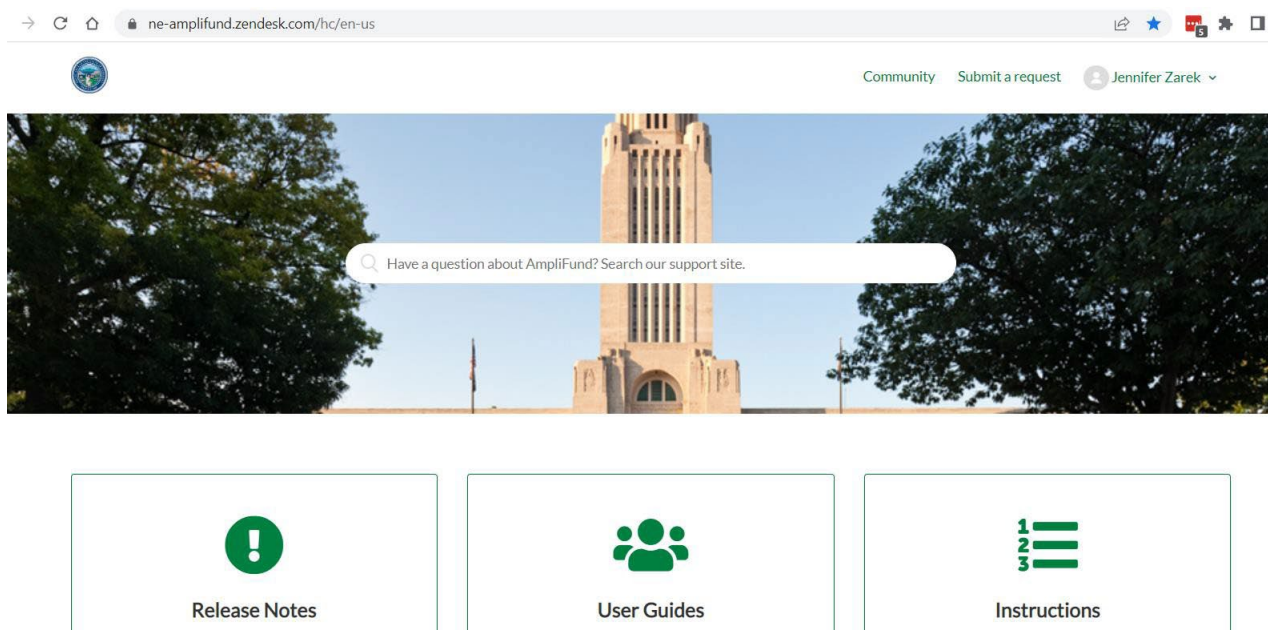
Other post-award user guides can be found by topic, such as Payment Requests or Amendments.

For also program-specific user guides, please see **Economic Recovery** (<https://dednebraska.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/categories/7542922996379-ARPA>).

## 8.2 GMS Help Portal

For user guides about using AmpliFund, please visit <https://ne-amplifund.zendesk.com>. This help portal will help you learn how to use the system, navigate the system, and more.

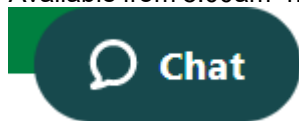




### 8.3 Customer Support

If you need help using the GMS to apply or manage you award, you can reach out to customer support in three different ways:

1. Call toll-free 1 (844) 735-0239
  - a. Available from 7:00am-7:00pm CDT
2. Online chat
  - a. Available from 8:00am-4:00pm CDT



3. Email [support@ne-amplifund.zendesk.com](mailto:support@ne-amplifund.zendesk.com)

## Record of Change

Find the Version identifier on the cover page of this document. Summary of Changes includes a brief description of the revisions.

Version	Date	Summary of Changes
1.0	08/2023	1. Initial Program Version: NSORG Program