



The Youth Outdoor Education Innovation Fund Guidelines

State of Nebraska
Department of Economic Development

May 2024

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The Youth Outdoor Education Innovation Fund

I. Introduction

The Youth Outdoor Education Innovation Fund (“Fund”) is codified in Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 81-1213.04 and 81-1213.05. The Fund is established to provide funding to a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (“Eligible Grantee”) to construct, develop, or renovate a youth outdoor education camp west of the one hundredth meridian that was destroyed by a natural or manmade disaster that occurred after January 1, 2022.

The Fund permits the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (“DED” or “Department”) to award one grant, not exceeding ten million dollars (\$10,000,000.00), to Eligible Grantee for the construction of the youth outdoor education camp.

Applications will be considered in the order in which completed applications are filed. DED shall have the sole discretion in evaluating applications for compliance with the law and these guidelines. The application and guidelines can be found on DED’s webpage (<https://opportunity.nebraska.gov>). Applications close at 5:00 p.m. on June 30, 2024, or when the Department awards the grant, whichever shall occur first.

II. Terms and Definitions

Eligible Grantee: A nonprofit organization holding a certificate of exemption under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

Eligible Location: A location on or contiguous to the location of a youth outdoor education camp that is located west of the one hundredth meridian where youth outdoor education camp facilities were destroyed by a natural or manmade disaster that occurred after January 1, 2022.

III. Application Criteria

All applications and supporting documentation must be submitted to DED electronically using the Department’s grants management system, AmpliFund. To apply, follow the “Apply Now” link on the DED Youth Outdoor Education Innovation Fund webpage, create a user profile in the AmpliFund application portal, and complete the application. The user profile allows for saving a partially completed application after the application opens.

Individuals who are hearing and/or speech impaired and have a TTY, may contact DED through the Statewide Relay System by calling (711) INSTATE (800) 833-7352 (TTY) or (800) 833-0920 (voice). The relay operator should be asked to call NDED at (800) 426-6505 or (402) 471-3111. Additional information can be found at the Nebraska Relay website <http://www.nebraskarelay.com/>.

Nebraska Relay offers Spanish relay service for our Spanish-speaking customers. Spanish-to-Spanish (711) or 1-888-272-5528/ Spanish-to-English (711) or 1-877-564-3503. Nebraska le ofrece el servicio de relevo a nuestros clientes en español. Los consumidores de TTY pueden escribir por máquina en español y las conversaciones serán retransmitidas en español y inglés.

All required documentation must be uploaded with the application and received by DED for an application to be reviewed. Filing an application does not guarantee approval. An application must include the following supporting documentation:

- A feasibility study for the intended use of the grant. The feasibility study must demonstrate the viability of the proposed project.
- A copy of the applicant’s 501(c)(3) determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service.
- The address or location of the proposed project.
- Documentation showing that a youth outdoor education camp located at or adjacent to the site of the proposed project was previously destroyed by a natural or manmade disaster that occurred after January 1, 2022 (e.g. insurance claim documentation).
- Documentation showing availability of cash matching funds.

IV. Award Approval

If the Department determines that an applicant satisfies the Fund’s statutory criteria, DED will issue a written notice of approval. If the Department determines that an applicant does not satisfy the Fund’s statutory criteria, DED will issue a written notice of denial.

Following a notice of approval, the Eligible Grantee will receive a GMS-generated email from AmpliFund Administrator, “no-reply@gotomygrants.com”, with instructions on how to access the award. This email is sent to the primary contact as identified in the application. The Eligible Grantee should check the spam or junk mail folder as email settings may direct this system-generated email there. If the primary contact’s information is no longer valid, the links in the email are expired, or the email is not received within 30 days of the notice of approval, the Eligible Grantee should contact the Fund coordinator.

The Eligible Grantee should identify a program manager to receive notifications and to execute or assign various tasks necessary to implement the grant (e.g. sign the agreement, submit completed ACH form, submit the annual reports and requisite documentation, etc.). In AmpliFund, the program manager will be referred to as the “Grant Manager.” The Eligible Grantee’s program manager is the primary point of contact for all program-related matters. All DED and GMS automated emails are directed to the program manager.

The application portal is distinct from the award management side of the GMS. The URL used to apply is different from the URL used to manage the matching funds program.

V. Disbursement of Grant Dollars

DED will require the Eligible Grantee to establish and maintain a separate bank account exclusively for the management of state grant dollars received from the Fund. State grant dollars from the Fund are transferred electronically to the account designated by the Eligible Grantee on the State of Nebraska ACH Enrollment Form. If an email address was provided on the State of Nebraska ACH Enrollment Form, it will be notified once a payment has been processed.

The Eligible Grantee shall receive state grant dollars from the Fund on a dollar-for-dollar matching basis which may be released in multiple stages at any time within ten years after being awarded the grant. To receive grant dollars, the Eligible Grantee must request a release of grant funds in the grants management system. The request to release grant funds must be supported by source documentation demonstrating that matching funds have been received in the amount requested for release. The applicant must also provide source documentation demonstrating that any state grant dollars previously received are being used to complete the project in conformity with the approved feasibility study that was submitted in support of the application.

VI. Qualifying Matching Funds

When requesting a release of grant funds, the Eligible Grantee must provide supporting source documentation demonstrating that matching funds have been received in the amount requested for release. Qualifying matching funds may include any of the following:

- **Cash Contribution**: Cash matches include payments made by cash, check, or electronic funds transfer. Cash contributions may be shown by: (i) a bank record that shows the name of the Eligible Grantee, the date of the contribution, and the amount of the contribution; or (ii) for contributions of petty cash, a receipt or other written communication from the Eligible Grantee showing the name of the Eligible Grantee, the name of the contributor, the date of the contribution, the amount of the contribution, and noted specifically for the youth outdoor education camp project. Bank records may include: a canceled check; a bank statement; a credit card statement; an electronic fund transfer receipt which includes documentation from the bank account of origin and destination; or a scanned image of both sides of a canceled check. Checks must be made payable to the Eligible Grantee and noted specifically for the project. Electronic funds transfers must be into the Eligible Grantee's bank account for the youth outdoor education camp project.
- **Real Estate**: Real estate, subject to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 81-1108.33, may be shown by the deed and documentation of at least one independent appraisal of the real property by a real property appraiser credentialed under the Nebraska Real Property Appraiser Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 76-2201 to 76-2250.
- **In-Kind**: An in-kind contribution includes the provision of services to the Eligible Grantee that if not provided, the Eligible Grantee would have to purchase. In-kind contributions may be shown by an affidavit (or other signed statement deemed acceptable to the Department) submitted by the individual or entity providing the in-kind contribution. The affidavit should demonstrate the net cost of the in-kind contribution and an explanation as to how the cost was calculated. Alternatively, in-kind contributions can be demonstrated by two price quotes demonstrating the cost of the in-kind contribution provided.
- **Private or Public Grant**: A private or public grant can be demonstrated with a copy of the grant award or operative grant agreement.
- **Gift**: A gift may be demonstrated by an affidavit (or other signed statement deemed acceptable to the Department) identifying the gift, the value of the gift, and how the value was determined, along with other information, as may be requested by the Department for the particular situation.
- **Endowment**: An endowment raised to sustain the uses described in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 81-1213.04(4) (Section VII of these Guidelines) may be shown by the legal instruments governing the endowment and the current balance of the endowed fund available for use.
- **Feasibility Study Expenses**: The expense for the feasibility study may be demonstrated by an invoice and the Eligible Grantee's corresponding proof of payment.
- **Planning Cost**: Planning cost for the youth outdoor education camp project may be shown with invoices and the Eligible Grantee's corresponding proofs of payment.

VII. Proper Use of Grant Dollars

In addition to the Eligible Grantee's periodic requests for release of funds addressed in Section V above, the Eligible Grantee will be required to submit annual reports to DED. The annual reports shall be submitted through the Department's grants management system and shall include both financial reporting and project performance reporting demonstrating the appropriate use of state grant dollars and the successful development of the project in conformity with the approved feasibility study. The Eligible Grantee will be required to provide source documentation in support of both its financial and project performance reports.

State grant dollars from the Fund must be used to pay for:

- Construction of physical structures;
- Construction of year-round facilities, including lodging, conference, and meeting facilities, and related infrastructure, to generate local and regional economic development;
- Equipment that will be used for construction and maintenance of physical structures, and facilities; and
- Infrastructure necessary to ensure accessibility to the physical structures and facilities by the public.

VIII. Recapture or Repayment of Grant Dollars

At the end of the ten-year allowable grant period, if any grant money was not spent in conformity with the approved feasibility study or if any unmatched grant money was erroneously awarded to the Eligible Grantee, the Eligible Grantee shall remit such grant money to the State Treasurer for credit to the Fund.

DED PROGRAM CONTACT PERSON

Questions regarding the application process should be sent to:

Emmah Muema
Economic Development Manager
Nebraska Department of Economic Development
Incentives Division
245 Fallbrook Blvd. Suite 002
Lincoln, NE 68521
emmah.muema@nebraska.gov
Cell: 531-249-4542
Website: opportunity.nebraska.gov