

USDA Rural Development Rural Business Development Grant Application Toolkit

Background

USDA Rural Development is charged with assisting in the startup, development and expansion of small and emerging businesses and/or non-profits in rural communities. Rural Development supports this portion of the overall mission through two grant programs, the RBEG and RBOG programs.

The Agency combined 7 CFR part 1942, subpart G and 7 CFR part 4284, subpart G into the RBDG rule at 7 CFR part 4280, subpart E. Rural Development has also integrated applicable general provisions of 7 CFR part 4284, subpart A into the RBDG rule. Essentially, the Agency did not change any of the requirements of either program but blended the two regulations into one and eliminated duplicative portions so that there is only one set of requirements. The Agency also combined definitions so that the public has one definition for both programs as well as blended the scoring requirements of both former regulations. Finally, the Agency blended the application processes into one streamlined set of procedures under the RBDG funding, incorporating the statutory language of the 2014 Farm Bill (7 U.S.C. 1932(c)) specifying how the funding would be split.

Rural Development makes RBEGs to public bodies, non-profit corporations and federally recognized Indian Tribes so that they may support the development and/or expansion of small and emerging businesses in rural communities.

Enterprise Grant type funds may be used to: Acquire or develop land, buildings, plants, equipment; access streets and roads, parking areas, utility extensions, necessary water and supply and waste disposal facilities; provide technical assistance; establish revolving loan funds; and to create, expand, or operate rural distance learning programs that provide educational or job training instruction related to potential employment or job advancement to adult students.

Opportunity Grant type funds are made to public bodies, non-profit corporations and federally recognized Indian Tribes to analyze rural business (small and emerging or larger business) opportunities, identify and/or provide training opportunities to rural entrepreneurs, conduct leadership development, establish training or technology centers and conduct technical assistance or area-wide planning activities.

Grant funds may be used for projects identified as either business opportunity type grants or business enterprise type grants. The Agency will set aside 10 percent of its RBDG appropriation for business opportunity type grants. The Agency reserves the right to reallocate funds set aside for business opportunity type grants to business enterprise type grants if it becomes apparent to the Agency that there is insufficient demand for the funds set aside for the business opportunity type grants.

Please provide one original via regular mail of complete application package to the appropriate office:

USDA Rural Development home page is: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/>

USDA Rural Development [**Insert Respective State**] home page is: [https://www.rd.usda.gov/\[Insert State Abbreviation\]](https://www.rd.usda.gov/[Insert State Abbreviation])

Checklist

Before submitting your application, please insure that you have completed the following:

SAMS Registration

All applicants for Federal grant funding must register in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database, or its successor database, known as the System for Award Management (SAM), at <https://www.sam.gov>, whether applying electronically or by paper, and at no cost. Registration may take 1-1.5 hours to complete and requires a UEI #, tax ID and business name, statistical and financial information about the business (including number of employees and annual receipts for each of previous 3 years), and Electronic Funds Transfer information for payment of grant disbursements to grantee (Routing #, Account #, ACH contact). Registration activation will take 1-5 days with an established tax ID; OR 2-5 weeks if a new Employer Identification Number is used. A cage code number and expiration date will be provided when the registration is activated and **must** be included in your RBDG application information. For technical assistance, call the toll-free assistance line at 1-866-606-8220 and press "1." Enter the registration cage code and expiration date in field 5(a), "Federal Entity Identifier," on Form SF-424.

This registration must remain active, with current information, at all times during which an entity has an application under consideration by an Agency or has an active Federal Award. To remain registered in the database after the initial registration, the applicant is required to review and annually update its information in the database to ensure it is current, accurate and complete.

Required Forms:

- Form SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance"
- Form SF-424A, "Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs"
- Form RD 400-1, "Equal Opportunity Agreement"
- Form RD 400-4, "Assurance Agreement"
- RD Inst. 1940-Q, EXH A-1, "Certification for Contracts, Grants, & Loans"
- RD Inst. 1970-A, EXH C, "Environmental Documentation Checklist"
- Section 6025 Strategic Economic and Community Development Information (Verify with USDA if appropriate for your project)

Environmental Requirements:

- Environmental Information Packet: Consult USDA for project appropriate material.
- Intergovernmental Review Comments: Consult USDA for state specific requirements.

Non-Profits: Include in Appendix A:

- Articles of Incorporation (including any amendments)
- Bylaws (including any amendments)
- Current (within 12 months) Certificate of Good Standing issued by the appropriate Secretary of State.
- Board Resolution authorizing entity to apply and administer the RBEG/RBOG including the name and title of the person authorized to sign grant documents.

Public Bodies: Include in Appendix A:

- Documentation of organization (dated established if other than town, county, or state government).
- Resolution passed by the governing board authorizing entity to apply and administer the RBEG/RBOG, including the name and title of the person authorized to sign grant documents.

Section 1. Summary Information:

- Legal name of applicant
- Requested Grant Amount
- UEI #
- SAM Registration Cage Code and Expiration Date
- Certification of Relationship to RD employee
- Certification of serving rural areas
- Certification of assisting small and emerging businesses (Enterprise Grant only)

Section 2. Applicant Type:

- Non-profit corporation
- Public Body / Municipality
- Federally recognized Indian Tribe

REAP ZONE APPLICANTS ONLY (ND, NY & VT) - Assigned Benchmark Number: 

Section 3. Project Eligibility:

- | | | |
|--|-----------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Enterprise Project | OR | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Opportunity Project |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstration of Need | | <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstration of Need |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clear identification (list) of Small and Emerging Business(es) to be assisted | | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Development Result |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suggested Performance Criteria | | <input type="checkbox"/> Local and Area Strategic Plans |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Suggested Performance Criteria |

Section 4. Scope of Work:

- Project Type / Description: RLF, Tech Assistance, Site, Feasibility Study
- Proposed Activities to be Accomplished
- Timeframe for Individual Activity Completion
- Timeframe (months) To Project Completion
- Timeframe from Grant Approval to Project Start

Checklist Continued:

Section 5. Written Narrative:

- Project Need
- Project Benefits
- Demonstrate Project Meets Eligible Grant Purpose
- Area(s) to be Served (be specific)
- Project Coordination with Area Economic Development Plans
- Goals to be Accomplished
- Identify Business(es) to be Assisted (if appropriate)
- Economic Development to be Accomplished
- Summary: How the Project will result in Created, Saved or Supported Jobs
- Quantify: Jobs Created, Saved and/or Supported for next 3 Year Period
- Description of Applicant Experience – Demonstrated Ability – Key Staff that Support Project
- Method and Rationale to Select Service Area and Proposed Benefitting Businesses
- Description of Project Methodology: Use of Organization Staff; Consultants; Contractors or Other
- Work Plan and Budget

Appendices:

- Appendix A – Organizational Documents §4280.427(b)
- Appendix B – Latest 3 Years Financial Information §4280.427(e)
- Appendix C – Supplemental Funds Verification §4280.427(g)
- Appendix D – Letters of Commitment from Businesses to be assisted (include jobs saved/created)
Letters of Support §4280.435(h)
- Appendix E – Additional Supporting Documentation

Rural Business Development Grant Instructions: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/files/4280e.pdf>

Application Template

Section 1: Summary Information

Legal Name of Applicant: Town of Bedford, Virginia
 (Verify from Articles/Bylaws)

Requested Grant Amount: \$50,000

Applicant Type—Check One:

- Nonprofit Entity
 Public Body/Government Entity
 Federally recognized Indian Tribe

Project Type – Check One:

- Enterprise Grant
 Opportunity Grant

UEI # HZK3HAND5828

SAM/CCR Registration Cage Code: [4XRG9](#)

Expiration Date: **November 12, 2024**

REAP ZONE APPLICANTS ONLY [ND, NY and VT]: Assigned Benchmark Number _____

Jobs Summary: *[Provide a summary of jobs on an FTE basis “prior to” and “projected at Year 3”]*

	Full Time	Part Time
Current- Existing # of jobs	122 approximate	60 approximate
Projected jobs to be created as a result of this project	TBD	TBD
Projected jobs to be saved as a result of this project	122 approximate	60 approximate

Businesses Assisted Summary:

	Number of Businesses
Total Businesses to be assisted:	61 approximate
Type of Sub-Business assisted: ¹	
Farmer/Rancher	0
Small Business	61 approximate
Individuals	0
Groups	0
Cooperatives	0
Type of Plan to be accomplished for the business (i.e. feasibility, business plans):	Business and marketing plan

¹ “Total Businesses Assisted” must equal the sum of “Sub-Businesses Assisted”

Project Summary *[Provide a concise summary of your proposed project]*

The Town of Bedford, VA, will partner with a procured consultant to provide market research, an in-market strategic visioning workshop, 5-Year strategic action plan, launch of local action teams, implementation jumpstart, and small business training to existing and future businesses in Downtown Bedford. The workshop will include a boots on the ground analysis, stakeholder input, and community collaboration, which, along with customized market research, will inform the creation of the 5-Year Strategic Plan, which is designed to be highly implementable in nature, practical, and customized. Once the plan is delivered, the consultant will facilitate the launch of a "Local Action Team" to create a sustainable framework of implementation. The consultant will also provide technical support to the town team as they prioritize the implementation of an initial strategy, in addition to supporting the efforts of the Local Action Team. Small Business training will then be provided to downtown merchants and business owners through an on-demand, go at your own pace training course that may feature training videos, worksheets, workbooks, and templates. The results of the plan will be used to inform the Town Comprehensive Plan that is scheduled to be revised.

All Grant Applicants – Complete certifications 1 – 3.

1. Relationships to RD employees

To assure the high standards of honesty, integrity, and impartiality maintained by Rural Development employees, we need to identify any Rural Development assistance to be provided to employees, their relatives, or their business or close personal associates. This includes insured or guaranteed, loans or grants to individuals or organizations. If you know of any relationship or association you (the applicant) may have with a Rural Development employee, please provide this information, or advise if there is none. Your response will allow us to make special provisions for processing but will not affect your application status.

Immediate family, other relatives or close associates who are USDA Rural Development employees, if any, are listed here _____

If none, indicate here X

2. Rural Location

Applicant (grantee) organizations may be located in "rural" or "non-rural" communities. **Benefitting business (es)** must be located in a rural community with a population of 50,000 or less population and not located in a town or town located within the urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a town or town with a population over 50,000. You may verify rural eligibility of **benefitting business (es)** using the [Rural Eligibility Website](#). Note your agreement here that all business(es) to be served will be located in eligible rural area(s). X

3. Citizenship Requirement

All business (es) assisted with grant funds must be at least 51 % owned by U.S. citizens or resident aliens (persons legally admitted for permanent residence). Note your agreement here that all proposed businesses assisted will be at least 51 % owned by U.S. citizens or resident aliens X

Enterprise Grant Applicants Only

4. Small and Emerging Private Business Enterprise Requirement

Enterprise Grant Funds. All businesses assisted with RBDG enterprise grant funds must meet the following definition: “Any private business which will employ 50 or fewer new employees and has less than \$1 million in projected gross revenues.” Note your agreement here that all business (es) assisted will meet the RBDG program definition of small and emerging private business enterprise X

5. Development or Financing of Small & Emerging Private Businesses - §4280.417(b)(2)

[Describe how grant funds will be used to finance and/or develop Small and Emerging Businesses in Rural Areas. Supporting documentation may be included in Appendix E]

The Town will procure a consultant with experience in business development and strategic planning for business attraction and growth. Developing small and emerging businesses is the pinnacle of the project. Every small business in downtown Bedford will receive technical assistance to elevate their offerings and operations. As currently proposed, the training consists of seven (7 hours) of virtual, on demand training focused on Omni-channel Retail Strategies. The training module will include training videos, downloadable resources and worksheets/workbooks, and a chat feature so local businesses can collaborate on challenges and lessons learned. Small and emerging businesses often do not have the expertise on creating and maintaining omni-channel strategies for their businesses. This omni-channel is important as consumers have changed the way they shop for goods and services. Further, through the real estate analysis and data analysis Bedford leadership will be able to identify a variety of businesses that could be supported and will be able to target specific retail and restaurant businesses for recruitment.

6. Revolving Loan Fund Requests Only - §4280.453

RBDG Revolving Loan Funds are processed in accordance with Subpart 4274-D, Intermediary Relending Program and serviced in accordance with Subpart 1951-R. RBDG revolving loan funds are limited to financing no more than 75% of total project costs. Applicants must identify in the Project Budget the minimum 25% non-federal leverage funds.

Use of Funds: All Agency funds must be used for the purpose of making eligible loan(s). Loans cannot exceed 75% of total project costs in accordance with §4274.331(b)(2).

RLF Operating Budget: RLF applications must include an Annual Budget in accordance with §4274.332(b)(2). RBDG revolving loan fund initial administrative costs are the responsibility of the applicant. As loans are repaid, principal and interest are the basis of the continuation of the revolving loan fund. Subject to an approved Operating Budget, interest collected may be used to offset administrative costs of the Loan Fund.

7. Equipment Purchase Requests Only

Provide a detailed list of equipment to be acquired along with supplemental funding (if applicable):

Equipment Description	RBDG Funds	Supplemental Funds If Applicable	Notes / Supplement Source

Total	\$	\$	

Pass Thru Prohibition §4280.423(m)(4)

[To prevent the grant funds from being classified as “Pass Thru” please provide a description of how the grantee (applicant) will establish and charge benefitting businesses (ultimate recipients) for the “fair market use” of the equipment.]

Opportunity Grant Applicants Only

8. Economic Development Result - §4280.417(b)(1)

Opportunity Type Grants may be made only when there is reasonable prospect that the project will result in economic development of a rural area. *[Describe the economic development that will occur as a result of the proposed project. Include demonstration of project sustainability. Supporting Documentation can be inserted in Appendix E]*

9. Consistency with Local and Area Strategic Plans - §4280.417(d)

Grants may be made only when the proposed project is consistent with local and area-wide strategic plans for community and economic development, coordinated with other economic development activities in the project area and consistent with USDA Rural Development State Strategic Plan. *[Describe how the project coincides with local or regional strategic plans. Supporting Documentation can be inserted in Appendix E]*

All Grant Applicants:

Basis for Project Success or Failure §4280.417(c)

[A] Demonstrated Need: *[Describe the demonstrated need for the project]*

Downtowns in many American communities have experienced more than fifty years of neglect, abuse, and abandonment. There are a number of factors that have contributed to this. Several decades of sprawl, prioritization of vehicular traffic systems, the rise of big-box development, and sometimes poor public policy have all worked counter to the health of Downtowns. Most recently, the pandemic has proven to be a contributing factor in the shift of business conducted in Downtown areas.

Fortunately, over the last two decades, this trend has slowly begun to shift. Today, cities of all sizes are beginning to implement plans to revitalize, re-grow, and reinvent their downtowns. Downtowns are critically important because they are the heart of a town and region — and having a healthy heart is essential to having a strong town and region.

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Downtowns are iconic and powerful symbols for a town and often contain the most iconic landmarks, distinctive features, and unique neighborhoods. Given that most Downtowns were one of the oldest neighborhoods town-wide, they offer rare insights into their town's past, present, and future. Revitalization of downtowns and central town neighborhoods can be challenging at best. However, Downtowns are often the hotbeds of business creativity, neighborhood activism, non-profit entrepreneurs, economic diversity, and an attraction for visitors, seniors, and young talent.

The Town of Bedford, VA had a revitalization plan developed in 2018 but the business climate of downtown has changed significantly since the pandemic and the market analysis is dated. The past efforts to improve the Downtown areas need to be re-evaluated to meet their full potential. Some Census Tracts in the area closest to Downtown are also the lowest in town for median income, median home value and higher renter-occupied ownership status.

Downtown Bedford is the core of both the Town and County of Bedford as a major employer and the true central business district of the area. The Town has a population of 7,500 and the surrounding County totals approximately 80,000 people. The Town has been actively working to make Downtown a destination for new urban living in existing under-utilized buildings.

The Town of Bedford, VA desires to utilize the Rural Business Development Grant in an amount of \$50,000, to provide targeted tools, strategies, funding, and assistance for the purpose of revitalizing Downtown Bedford, thus creating jobs, providing economic stimulus, and enhancing the quality of life. The target of this plan is the business climate. The Town is currently working on updating its 2017 Comprehensive Plan.

Larger counties in Virginia, of which Bedford County is one, continue to grow at unprecedented rates, and thus a considerable amount of business recruitment and retention and revitalization programs are being designed to benefit the larger communities without regard as to its impact on the rest of Virginia. The needs of citizens living in rural or less populated areas are being pushed to the wayside, but the one-size-fits-all redevelopment attitude does not work for everyone. It is the aim of the Town of Bedford, VA to ensure the voices of rural and smaller communities in Virginia are heard and our stakeholders have a seat at the table when private investors are making decisions impacting our community regarding their next creative development.

Municipal leaders with limited staff are left with little to no time and budget to educate themselves on appropriate and impactful revitalization techniques, and local municipal budgets are tight and make it difficult for community leaders to invest the necessary time and resources into Downtown revitalization and development. The Town of Bedford, VA, is in need of strategically developing their Downtown through implementable and practical solutions. The Town of Bedford has been working with an outside consultant that specializes in retail attraction. Through formal procurement of an experienced consultant, the Town of Bedford, VA, seeks one to facilitate the provision of technical assistance in the form of downtown revitalization strategic engagement, training, planning, and implementation to Downtown Bedford.

[B] Project Evaluation: *[Describe the basis for determining the success or failure of the project]* Through this process we cannot guarantee immediate tangible success as downtown revitalization involves multiple uncontrollable variables. Small rural communities, however, are unable to begin or jumpstart their revitalization efforts because they lack the right tools and education necessary to assemble a strategic vision with implementable strategies and solutions. These lack of resources and technical experience limit the efficacy and efficiency of the communities' efforts. A consultant will be procured based on their success with their own program model. This model should overcome these limitations and provide a model to work collaboratively with town leaders and stakeholders to formulate an implementable strategic vision and plan that the whole community can buy into. Depending on the consultant, the process may also include launching local action teams and an Implementation Jumpstart so that the plan can immediately move into implementation. Training is the pinnacle of the program so that local businesses can elevate their offerings and operations.

It is expected that project success will measure organizational performance against critical success factors, such as strategic and meaningful investment of public dollars, catalyzing private investment, growing a more welcoming Downtown, improving economic strength and enhancing quality of life in the interior core. Once the partnership is complete, determining the effective output of the project will be based on the following tangibles over time:

Public Resources Leveraged – communities should align their investment in public facilities to advance implementation of the community-defined priorities presented in the 5-Year Strategic Action Plan. Where other funding sources are available, communities should work to pursue and leverage outside contributions to deliver the best project possible for the community and maximize the value of every dollar invested.

Number & Affordability of Households - The density and diversity of residents in communities is directly related to the neighborhood or downtown's ability to attract and support the mix of retail stores, restaurants and other services and amenities required to continue growing a strong, diverse, engaged community.

Development Investment Leveraged - Investment capital flows to places where risk is low and the potential for returns are favorable. Communities should work to position themselves in a way that attracts investment. This includes spearheading initiatives that ensure the community is clean, safe, beautiful, accessible, eventful and vibrant. It also includes gap finance tools to catalyze real property investments that otherwise would not happen. In other words, the amount of development investment leveraged is a leading indicator of the community's progress towards fulfilling its mission.

Tax Increment Value Creation - Tax increment is a market-driven financing mechanism used to clean up blighted property, support private investment and development, catalyze revitalization and elevate quality of life. Tax increment is produced when the tax value of properties within communities increase through new investment and community improvement.

Active Social Media & Digital Presence - A robust online communications platform enables communities to affordably reach a diverse audience with relevant information, enhance organizational transparency and maintain a high level of customer service and community engagement.

Speed of Project Implementation – The Downtown Strategic Visioning Workshop 5-year Plan deliverables will clearly define the community's priorities for the next five years of growth. That means communities should be well positioned to act with speed to implement the community vision. Organizations and cities capable of quickly advancing concepts are figuratively one step ahead of the competition.

[C] Project Elements: [*\[Describe the major elements of the project\]*](#) [With the help of a collaboration with a professional consultant, the Town of Bedford, VA, will have the opportunity to receive a Downtown Revitalization partnership and deliverables, which is expected to provide:](#)

- [Market Research such as demographic breakdown, daytime population studies, Gap Analysis, and potential retail focus categories for the future](#)
- [Local Collaboration through an electronic survey and stakeholder input sessions](#)
- [Strategic Visioning Workshop which includes boots on the ground analysis and needs assessment](#)
- [5-year Strategic Action Plan](#)
- [Launch of Local Action Team to build a sustainable framework for continued implementation](#)

- [Implementation assistance which includes technical support from the consulting team to get strategies from the Action Plan implemented quickly](#)
- [Small Business Training \(7 hours\) for small businesses in the community delivered on-demand, focused on Omni-Channel methods and how to get businesses online.](#)

[The Town of Bedford, VA will direct the work of a consultant that will provide services to the Town of Bedford, VA. The Town of Bedford, VA core team will oversee the program, participate in the Strategic Visioning Workshop, and ensure that the strategic plan deliverable, business training, and implementation programming falls in line with the standards, goals, and mission statement. The Downtown Strategic Plan will inform the Comprehensive Plan revision being undertaken by the Town Planning Commission.](#)

[D] Project Impact: [\[Describe the procedures that will be used to assess project impact at its conclusion\]](#) [The team will evaluate the community's efforts in two phases. The first phase will be short-term and includes community's successful completion of program objectives. This will be monitored and measured by the consultant. The second phase will be a longer-term evaluation and will measure the aforementioned criteria over the course of 1, 3 and 5 years. This will be measured by the locality over the course of time. If the Plan is adopted into the Comprehensive Plan, implementation strategies may become part of the Capital Improvement Program.](#)

Proposed Scope of Work - §4280.427(c)

3.1 Project Description – Opportunity Projects §4280.417(a)(1) or Enterprise Projects §4280.417(a)(2)

[\[Describe the project type: Technical Assistance, Revolving Loan Fund, Industrial Site or Business Opportunity\]](#)
[Technical Assistance](#)

3.2 Project Activities and Timeline

[\[Detail the key project activities to be accomplished and identify corresponding timeframes for each task.\]](#)

The below listed tasks are specific to a vision of the process and may change when the final consultant is procured. The framework should be similar to that shown below. The outcomes of the plan should not vary.

TASK #1 (Sept 2024) Town of Bedford, VA engages a consultant for Downtown Revitalization partnership.

TASK #2 (Sept 2024) Consultant sets up accounts for town.

TASK #3 (Sept 2024) Consultant holds What to Expect webinar for Core Team members to detail process and expectations and to provide forum for questions. Onboarding Form is provided for Client to complete. Partnership timeline is approved, including in-market workshop.

TASK #4 (Oct 2024) Consultant performs Market Analysis and creates deliverable.

TASK #5 (Nov 2024) Marketing materials are created and submitted to client for in-market workshop, and electronic survey is provided for client to circulate. Invitations should be extended to stakeholders.

TASK #6 (Jan 2025) In-market Strategic Visioning Workshop takes place.

TASK # 7(Feb 2025) Market Analysis deliverable is presented virtually.

TASK #8 (March 2025) 5-Year Strategic Action Plan is written, then presented virtually. Plan is then finalized after review.

TASK #9 (May 2025) Consultant holds Implementation activity to go over the upcoming Project Mapping Workshop, deliver the Action Planning Workbook, and discuss recruiting local Action Teams.

TASK #10 (June 2025) Consultant facilitates Project Mapping Workshop virtually and sets up local Action Team to hold their first 30/30 meeting.

TASK #11 (June – Aug 2025) Technical assistance is provided to Core Team for priority strategies for implementation.

TASK #12 (Aug 2025) Consultant delivers Omni-channel training module to local businesses to provide further technical assistance and engagement. Training module should be available to businesses for 12 months.

TASK #13 (Sept 2025) Consultant holds Wrap-up call with each community to officially close-out the partnership.

3.2 Project Duration

[Outline the months of project duration – explain (if applicable) any major breaks between activity points.]

September 2024 to February 2025: Discovery Phase where consultant will on-board core team in Town of Bedford, complete market analysis, create marketing materials, and conduct in market visit with Strategic Visioning Workshop.
March 2025 to April 2025: Connect Phase where consultant will present the Strategic Plan and connect with core team to make revisions and finalize.

April 2025 to September 2025: Advance Phase where consultant and core team in Town of Bedford will collaborate to implement strategies from strategic plan. Further, the Small Business Technical support platform is launched.

No major breaks are anticipated.

3.2 Project Implementation

[Identify the expected timeframe between Award of Funds and Project Start – explain (if applicable) any delays.]

Once the Town of Bedford is notified of Award of Funds, the Town will procure a consultant and execute an agreement with both USDA and the selected consultant. As scheduling allows the partnership will commence immediately after contract execution. No delays are anticipated.

Written Narrative - §4280.427(d)

4.1 Project Need

[Explain the project need. Supporting documentation can be inserted in Appendix E]

The Town of Bedford Department of Planning and Community Development and the Economic Development Office are staffed by the same single staff member. Assistance is needed to provide business development and recruitment to supplement the time and budget of the Town departments. The Town of Bedford, VA had a revitalization plan developed in 2018 but the business climate of downtown has changed significantly since the pandemic and the market analysis is dated with growth in the areas around the Town. Some Census Tracts in the area closest to Downtown are also the lowest in town for median income, median home value and higher renter-occupied ownership status.

[Downtown Bedford is the core of both the Town and County of Bedford as a major employer and the true central business district of the area. The Town has a population of 7,500 and the surrounding County totals approximately 80,000 people. The Town has been actively working to make Downtown a destination for new urban living in existing under-utilized buildings.](#)

4.2 Project Benefits

[Explain the benefits of the proposed project. Supporting documents can be inserted in Appendix E]

A key element in the plan development is community engagement. A Strategic Visioning Workshop will create the following benefits in Downtown Bedford, VA:

- Community collaboration through stakeholder input sessions and community assessment surveys
- A unified plan for various community organizations to follow to ensure that all efforts contribute to a greater strategic vision with implementable solutions
- Stronger local businesses and employment growth in retail and service sectors, through identification of opportunities for growth and expansion based on existing and potential markets
- New investments (e.g. renewed facades, new tenants/owners or new design features) that contribute to a sense of investment security and stability in the downtowns
- Aesthetic improvements in both public and private spaces downtown that support broader quality of place improvements to attract and retain employees in the community
- In the long-term, new residential development at a variety of densities and tenures in the downtown
- Increased community fiscal sustainability, including increased tax assessment from previously underutilized spaces and efficient use of existing infrastructure through infill development

4.3 Eligible Grant Purpose

See: Opportunity Projects §4280.417(a)(1) or Enterprise Projects §4280.417(a)(2)

[Explain how the proposed project meets an eligible grant purpose. Supporting documents can be inserted in Appendix E]

[Technical assistance to small and emerging rural businesses](#)

4.4 Area to be Served

[Describe the area to be served, identifying each governmental unit (i.e. town, county, etc.) to be affected by the project.]

The Town of Bedford, specifically the downtown area will be the most impacted by the project.

At the 2020 census there were 6,657 people in the town and there has seen minimal population growth over the last 20 years. There are 3,163 housing units. The racial makeup of the town is 74.4% White, 16.8% Black or African American, 0.2% American Indian, 0.7% Asian, 0.1% Pacific Islander, 1.2% from other races, and 6.7% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 2.9%. The town has a poverty rate of 19% and a median household income of \$39,896.

Since 2020, the Town experienced the second phase of a negotiated boundary adjustment with surrounding Bedford County. The estimated population as of July 1, 2023 is 7,500. The demographic of the population has not been estimated since that population change. However, the same low-income Census Tracts exist within the town.

4.5 Description of Project Coordination with Area Economic Development

[Describe the area to be served, identifying each governmental unit (i.e. town, county, etc.) to be affected by the project.]

Town Council provided a resolution authorizing the application and will support the positive outcomes of the Plan. The Town Economic Development Authority will be involved in the project as well. The EDA Strategic Plan from 2021 envisions a Business Incubator, which the EDA is seeking assistance from the Tobacco Commission to fund a study of at this time. The

two projects will work together to provide a complete picture of opportunities for businesses, particularly in attracting startups and entrepreneurs. The EDA for Bedford County will be informed of the project.

Participation by local non-profits, EDAs, and governmental bodies is essential to the success of the program. All will be included in the Strategic Visioning Workshop where they'll have an opportunity to provide feedback, collaborate on the direction of the 5-Year Strategic Action Plan, and be asked to support the successful implementation of the plan by authorizing local policy, providing in-kind of financial support for implementation strategies and to adopt the plan.

4.6 Businesses Assisted – Economic Development

[Describe the business(es) to be assisted, if appropriate; and Economic Development to be accomplished.]

Every small business in the Town of Bedford will have the opportunity to participate in the Strategic Visioning Workshop and sign up to receive technical assistance on business and marketing strategies via the Omni- Channel training module. Restaurant Businesses such as the Bridge St. Café and Clam Diggers have already thrown in their support for the project. Further, the Chamber of Commerce and the Bower Center have pledged their support for their members in the endeavor. The downtown business entities range from locally owned boutiques, drug stores, jewelry stores, print shops, florists, and many others.

As for Economic Development, the Downtown Strategic Plan will accomplish:

- Stronger local businesses and employment growth in retail and service sectors, through identification of opportunities for growth and expansion based on existing and potential markets
- New investments (e.g. renewed facades, new tenants/owners or new design features) that contribute to a sense of investment security and stability in the downtowns
- Aesthetic improvements in both public and private spaces downtown that support broader quality of place improvements to attract and retain employees in the community
- Increased community fiscal sustainability, including increased tax assessment from previously underutilized spaces and efficient use of existing infrastructure through infill development

4.7 Job Impact – 3 Years

[Explain how the project will result in newly created, increased or supported jobs and the number of projected new and supported jobs within 3 years.]

Stronger local businesses and employment growth in retail and service sectors, through identification of opportunities for growth and expansion based on existing and potential markets will enhance existing businesses and will support a projected **122** full-time jobs and **60** part-time jobs in the study area. Additionally, technical assistance and training on omni-channel retail strategies will strengthen existing business operations and support the current entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Small Business Training – Focusing on business retention, a consultant will provide seven (7) hours of virtual, on-demand training focused on Omni-channel Retail Strategies. The training module will include training videos, downloadable resources and worksheets/workbooks, and a chat feature so local businesses can collaborate on challenges and lessons learned.

Revitalized downtowns with thriving businesses and residential developments create places where people want to live, work, shop, eat and gather for recreation and entertainment, which provides a stronger and more sustainable business ecosystem.

A Downtown Revitalization Partnership will create the following benefits in and for merchants of Downtown Bedford, VA:

- Community collaboration through stakeholder input session and community assessment survey
- A unified plan for various community organizations to follow to ensure that all efforts contribute to a greater strategic vision with implementable solutions
- Stronger local businesses and employment growth in retail and service sectors, through identification of opportunities for growth and expansion based on existing and potential markets
- New investments (e.g. renewed facades, new tenants/owners or new design features) that contribute to a sense of investment security and stability in the downtown
- Aesthetic improvements in both public and private spaces downtown that support broader quality of place improvements to attract and retain employees in the community
- In the long-term, new residential development at a variety of densities and tenures in the downtown
- Increased community fiscal sustainability, including increased tax assessment from previously underutilized spaces and efficient use of existing infrastructure through infill development

Downtown revitalization is a marathon, not a sprint. While some immediate benefits will be realized through successful implementation of 5-Year Strategic Action Plan, most efforts will take 3-5 years or more following implementation to show tangible benefits. This effort is sustainable through the 5-year nature of the plan, the community collaboration that the program entails, and the technical assistance provided to businesses that will assist them for multiple years to come, and most importantly, through the creation of Local Action Teams and Implementation Support, which creates a sustainable framework of long-term implementation.

4.8 Applicant Experience – Key Personnel

[Describe applicant entity demonstrated capability and experience in providing the proposed assistance or similar economic development activities. Include experience of key personnel providing project activities and managing project.]

The Town of Bedford, VA in partnership with a consultant will be involved in this project. The consultant will utilize their staff to provide their services to The Town of Bedford, VA. The Town of Bedford, VA core team will oversee the program, participate in the Strategic Visioning Workshop, and ensure that the strategic plan deliverable, business training, and implementation programming falls in line with the standards, goals, and mission statement. The Town team will most likely involve oversight by the Town Economic Development Authority.

Mary Zirkle, Director of Planning and Community Development, also serves as the Economic Development Coordinator. Mary A. Zirkle has been in the field of planning in the private and public sectors for over 25 years, as well as in local government management as a town manager. She has focused on economic development since 2014 and reprised an economic development role when she joined the Town of Bedford in 2018. In her current role as Director of Planning and Community Development she assists elected officials, citizens and businesses with land use matters, and works to attract and retain businesses with a holistic approach through interactive community development. She serves as staff to the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and Redevelopment and Housing Authority. Mary's other role in Bedford is the Town Economic Development Coordinator serving the Economic Development Authority.

Mary holds AICP Certified Planner credentials, is a Certified Zoning Administrator, and is a graduate of the Economic Development Institute through the University of Oklahoma and IEDC. Mary has extensive experience in grant writing and management for private (AARP), State (DHCD, DRPT, VDOT, VEDP, VDOF) and Federal (USDA, EPA) grant-funded projects.

The consultant chosen will have experience in the following:

community development and downtown revitalization experience, policy and economic vitality, design and tourism and promotion. In addition the consultant should be able to have a focus on market research, activating vacant property, and the identification of business categories to fill the product and service gaps within each community’s trade area. Experience in real estate and property management will be needed.

4.9 Rationale: Project Area

[Describe the method and rationale used to select the area(s) and business(es) that will benefit from assistance.]

The Town of Bedford is in the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan and EDA Strategic Plan and launching an Incubator Project. A Downtown Strategic Plan will round out the other plans that are in the works; further, the expected Small Business Support Modules will aid in our content development of our small business incubator.

The Downtown area serves as the central business district. Prior to the 2023 town boundary adjustment, the 2020 census showed 6,657 people in the town and minimal population growth over the last 20 years within the town. There were 3,163 housing units. The racial makeup of the town was 74.4% White, 16.8% Black or African American, 0.2% American Indian, 0.7% Asian, 0.1% Pacific Islander, 1.2% from other races, and 6.7% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 2.9%. The town had a poverty rate of 19% and a median household income of \$39,896.

4.10: Project Execution

[Describe how the work will be performed including whether organization staff, consultants or contractors will be used.]

The project will be a collaborative effort between the Town of Bedford and a consultant.

a. Project Budget Summary

Summarize the total project budget by task. Project should reasonably be completed within 1 full year after it has begun. Insert additional rows as needed.

Activity #	Task Name and Description	Start Date	End Date	RBDG Funds	Supplemental Funds	Total Project Costs
1-13	Contractual	Sept. 2024	Sept. 2025	\$50,000		\$50,000
	TOTAL PROJECT			\$50,000	\$	\$ 50,000

b. Sources of Funding

*[Identify sources and amounts of matching funds. Provide written verifiable commitment of funds from other sources. An authorized representative of the organization contributing funds from another source must provide evidence that the funds are **available** and will be used for the proposed project. Verification of matching funds documentation should be in Appendix D.]* N/A

c. Task Budget Format

Provide a budget table for **each task** that will be completed for **each main activity** listed above. *Add additional task tables as needed.*

TASK #1 Town of Bedford, VA engages consultant for Downtown Revitalization partnership.	RGBD FUNDS	Supplemental Funds	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS
Personnel			
Fringe Benefits			
Travel			
Supplies			
Contractual	\$100		\$100
TASK #2 Consultant sets up Basecamp accounts for Town of Bedford, VA.	RGBD FUNDS	Supplemental Funds	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS
Personnel			
Fringe Benefits			
Travel			
Supplies			
Contractual	\$150		\$150
TASK #3 Consultant holds What to Expect webinar for Core Team members in the community to detail process and expectations and to provide forum for questions. Onboarding Form is provided for Client to complete. Partnership timeline is approved, including in-market workshop.	RGBD FUNDS	Supplemental Funds	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS
Personnel			
Fringe Benefits			
Travel			
Supplies			
Contractual	\$750		\$750
Task #4 Consultant performs Market Analysis and creates deliverable.	RGBD FUNDS	Supplemental Funds	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS
Personnel			
Fringe Benefits			
Travel			
Supplies			
Contractual	\$10,000		10,000
Task #5 Marketing materials are created and submitted to client for in-market workshop, and electronic survey is provided for client to circulate. Invitations should be extended to stakeholders.	RGBD FUNDS	Supplemental Funds	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS
Personnel			

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<i>Fringe Benefits</i>			
<i>Travel</i>			
<i>Supplies</i>			
<i>Contractual</i>	\$1,250		\$1,250
TASK #6 In-market Strategic Visioning Workshop takes place in Bedford.	<i>RGBD FUNDS</i>	Supplemental Funds	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS
<i>Personnel</i>			
<i>Fringe Benefits</i>			
<i>Travel</i>			
<i>Supplies</i>			
<i>Contractual</i>	\$12,500		\$12,500
Task #7 Market Analysis deliverable is presented virtually.	<i>RGBD FUNDS</i>	Supplemental Funds	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS
<i>Personnel</i>			
<i>Fringe Benefits</i>			
<i>Travel</i>			
<i>Supplies</i>			
<i>Contractual</i>	\$750		\$750
TASK #8 5-Year Strategic Action Plan is written, then presented virtually. Client has 2-3 weeks to review and make revisions. Plan is then finalized.	<i>RGBD FUNDS</i>	Supplemental Funds	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS
<i>Personnel</i>			
<i>Fringe Benefits</i>			
<i>Travel</i>			
<i>Supplies</i>			
<i>Contractual</i>	\$12,500		\$12,500
TASK #9 Consultant holds Implementation Jumpstart call to go over the upcoming Project Mapping Workshop, deliver the Action Planning Workbook, and discuss recruiting local Action Team.	<i>RGBD FUNDS</i>	Supplemental Funds	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS
<i>Personnel</i>			
<i>Fringe Benefits</i>			
<i>Travel</i>			
<i>Supplies</i>			
<i>Contractual Travel Expenses</i>	\$750		\$750
TASK #10 Consultant facilitates Project Mapping Workshop virtually and sets up local Action Team to hold their first 30/30 meeting.	<i>RGBD FUNDS</i>	Supplemental Funds	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS
<i>Personnel</i>			
<i>Fringe Benefits</i>			
<i>Travel</i>			
<i>Supplies</i>			

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<i>Contractual-Supplies</i>	\$2,500		\$2,500
<i>TASK #11</i> Technical assistance is provided to Core Team for priority strategies for implementation.	RGBD FUNDS	Supplemental Funds	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS
<i>Personnel</i>			
<i>Fringe Benefits</i>			
<i>Travel</i>			
<i>Supplies</i>			
<i>Contractual</i>	\$3,750		\$3,750
<i>TASK #12</i> Consultant delivers Omni-channel Retail Strategies training module to local businesses in Downtown to provide further technical assistance and engagement. A business database can be batch uploaded to deliver content directly to inboxes of businesses. Training module is available to businesses for 12 months.	RGBD FUNDS	Supplemental Funds	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS
<i>Personnel</i>			
<i>Fringe Benefits</i>			
<i>Travel</i>			
<i>Supplies</i>			
<i>Contractual</i>	\$3,750		\$3,750
<i>Task #13</i> Consultant holds Wrap-up call to officially close-out the partnership.	RGBD FUNDS	Supplemental Funds	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS
<i>Personnel</i>			
<i>Fringe Benefits</i>			
<i>Travel</i>			
<i>Supplies</i>			
<i>Contractual</i>	\$1,250		\$1,250

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Scoring Criteria: Population - Proposed project(s) will be located in a community of:

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Under 5,000 | 15 points |
| 2. Between 5,000 and less than 15,000 | 10 points |
| 3. Between 15,000 and 25,000 | 5 points |

The population of the Town is 7,500.

Scoring Criteria: Unemployment - Proposed project(s) will be located in areas where the unemployment rate:

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Exceeds the State rate by 25% or more | 20 points |
| 2. Exceeds the State rate by less than 25% | 10 points |
| 3. Is equal to or less than the State rate | 0 points |

The Town unemployment rate is not calculated separately from Bedford County.

Scoring Criteria: Medium Household income - Proposed project(s) will be located in areas where the median household income (MHI) for the State is:

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Less than poverty line | 25 points |
| 2. More than poverty line but less than 65% | 15 points |
| 3. Between 65% and 85% | 10 points |
| 4. Equal to or greater than 85% | 0 points |

The Town had a poverty rate of 19% and a median household income of \$39,896 in the 2020 Census. The median household income in Virginia (4 people) is \$114,081.

Scoring Criteria: Economic Distress - Points will be awarded for each of the following criteria met by the community or communities to benefit from the grant (cannot exceed 40 points total):

- | | | |
|--|-----------|------------------------|
| 1. Trauma | 15 points | FEMA Designation _____ |
| (Natural disaster occurred not more than 3 years prior to filing application) | | |
| 2. Economic distress | 15 points | |
| (Military Base/Employer 20% or more loss in total jobs) | | |
| 3. Long-Term Poverty | 10 points | |
| (Demonstrated by being a former EZ/EC, REAP, CC or a persistent poverty county) - indicate which _____ | | |
| 4. Long-term population decline | 10 points | |
| (Demonstrated by latest 3 decennial Census) - Show amounts _____ | | |

Subtotal _____ (Cannot Exceed 40 Points)

The Town is a Federally-designated Opportunity Zone (per DHCD OZ mapping). The Town also has a Virginia Enterprise Zone (#12).

4.10 Coordination with Area Economic Development Activities

[Description of how the project will coordinate Economic Development activities with other Economic Development Activities within the project area. Supporting Documentation can be inserted in Appendix G]

The Town EDA is in the process of updating its 2021 Strategic Plan which envisions redevelopment of vacant structures and the development of a Business Incubator.

4.11 Businesses to be Assisted and Economic Development to be Accomplished

[Describe Businesses to be assisted (if appropriate) and Economic Development to be accomplished. Supporting Documentation can be inserted in Appendix G] The target area of the grant request are businesses in the downtown / central business district. There are approximately 61 businesses in downtown and several vacant buildings that can be used for new businesses.

Scoring Criteria: Applicant has written evidence that small business development will be supported by startup or expansion as a result of the grant. 5 points for each letter for separate businesses up to 25 points

4.12 Jobs Created/Saved

[Describe how the proposed project will create jobs or save existing jobs in the service area and provide an estimated number of jobs created and jobs saved. This is evidenced by letters from rural businesses that will be directly assisted in Appendix F.] Stronger local businesses and employment growth in retail and service sectors, through identification of opportunities for growth and expansion based on existing and potential markets will enhance existing businesses and will support a projected **122** full-time jobs and **60** part-time jobs in the study area. Additionally, technical assistance and training on omni-channel retail strategies will strengthen existing business operations and support the current entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Number of jobs expected to be created TBD or saved 152

Jobs created are the jobs created by the “businesses assisted” and are directly related to, a result of, and attributed to the project funded by the RBDG project. Jobs created are generally located at the project site; however, jobs created may be located off site if they are employed by the business assisted and are directly related to the project. Examples may include increases in off-site sales staff due to a production expansion project. Enter the estimated number of jobs that will be created if the project is implemented. Part-time and seasonal jobs will be converted to full-time equivalents (FTE): count 2 part-time jobs as 1 full-time job; count 3 seasonal jobs as 1 full-time job. If part-time and/or seasonal jobs add up to a fraction, round up to the next whole number.

Scoring Criteria: Applicant has written evidence that the proposed project will create and/or support existing jobs. The number of jobs must be evidenced by a written commitment from the business to be assisted.

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. One job for less than \$5,000 | 25 points |
| 2. One job for 5,000 but less than \$10,000 | 20 points |
| 3. One job for \$10,000 but less than \$15,000 | 15 points |
| 4. One job for \$15,000 but less than \$20,000 | 10 points |

5. One job for \$20,000 but less than \$25,000

5 points

Amount of Grant divided by number of jobs = \$ 2,631 /jobs

4.13 Applicant Expertise

[Insert key personnel, names and experience of personnel on staff and, if applicable, under contract to be utilized for delivery of project tasks. Identify their connection to the project and include a resume of their experience. Attach resumes and other supporting documentation of experience in Appendix E]

The Town has been in contact with an experienced consultant that can perform the strategic work, however, we cannot begin procurement until an award is made.

Scoring Criteria: Applicant has evidence of successful experience in type of activity.

- 1. 10 or more years 30 points
- 2. At least 5 but less than 10 years 20 points
- 3. At least 3 but less than 5 years 10 points
- 4. At least 1 but less than 3 years 5 points

Number of years' experience

4.14 Work Plan Narrative

[Insert work plan narrative including how the grant purposes will be accomplished and milestones for accomplishing the proposed tasks. Additionally, if selected for funding, provide a statement indicating how soon after notification of grant obligation project will begin]

The below listed tasks are specific to a vision of the process and may change when the final consultant is procured. The framework should be similar to that shown below. The outcomes of the plan should not vary.

TASK #1 (Sept 2024) Town of Bedford, VA engages a consultant for Downtown Revitalization partnership.

TASK #2 (Sept 2024) Consultant sets up accounts for town.

TASK #3 (Sept 2024) Consultant holds What to Expect webinar for Core Team members to detail process and expectations and to provide forum for questions. Onboarding Form is provided for Client to complete. Partnership timeline is approved, including in-market workshop.

TASK #4 (Oct 2024) Consultant performs Market Analysis and creates deliverable.

TASK #5 (Nov 2024) Marketing materials are created and submitted to client for in-market workshop, and electronic survey is provided for client to circulate. Invitations should be extended to stakeholders.

TASK #6 (Jan 2025) In-market Strategic Visioning Workshop takes place.

TASK # 7(Feb 2025) Market Analysis deliverable is presented virtually.

TASK #8 (March 2025) 5-Year Strategic Action Plan is written, then presented virtually. Plan is then finalized after review.

TASK #9 (May 2025) Consultant holds Implementation activity to go over the upcoming Project Mapping Workshop, deliver the Action Planning Workbook, and discuss recruiting local Action Teams.

TASK #10 (June 2025) Consultant facilitates Project Mapping Workshop virtually and sets up local Action Team to hold their first 30/30 meeting.

TASK #11 (June – Aug 2025) Technical assistance is provided to Core Team for priority strategies for implementation.

TASK #12 (Aug 2025) Consultant delivers Omni-channel training module to local businesses to provide further technical assistance and engagement. Training module should be available to businesses for 12 months.

TASK #13 (Sept 2025) Consultant holds Wrap-up call with each community to officially close-out the partnership.

The project will begin in September 2024, pending the timing of an award and contract negotiation with USDA. The Town will procure a consultant at notice of an award.

d. Project Budget Summary

See 4.10.c. Task Budget Form above. The Town will procure a consultant that will lay out the specific tasks.

Summarize the total project budget by task. Project should reasonably be completed within 1 full year after it has begun. Insert additional rows as needed.

Activity #	Task Name and Description	Start Date	End Date	RBDG Funds	Supplemental Funds	Total Project Costs
	TOTAL PROJECT			\$	\$	\$

e. Sources of Funding

*[Identify sources and amounts of matching funds. Provide written verifiable commitment of funds from other sources. An authorized representative of the organization contributing funds from another source must provide evidence that the funds are **available** and will be used for the proposed project. Verification of matching funds documentation should be in Appendix D.]* **No matching funds are proposed. Town of Bedford staff will provide in-kind services for grant administration.**

f. Task Budget Format

See 4.10.c. Task Budget Form above. The Town will procure a consultant that will lay out the specific tasks not to exceed the \$50,000 requested amount.

Provide a budget table for **each task** that will be completed for **each main activity** listed above. Add additional task tables as needed.

Task #1 Budget Categories	RBDG Funds	Supplemental Funds	Total Project Costs
Personnel			

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Fringe Benefits			
Travel			
Supplies			
Contractual			
Total	\$	\$	\$

Provide explanation/clarification of the basis for the above budget figures:

[Insert task budget explanation]

Task #2 Budget Categories	RBDG Funds	Supplemental Funds	Total Project Costs
Personnel			
Fringe Benefits			
Travel			
Supplies			
Contractual			
Total	\$	\$	\$

Provide explanation/clarification of the basis for the above budget figures:

[Insert task budget explanation]

Scoring Criteria: *Leveraging - Applicant has evidence of commitment of funds from nonfederal sources for proposed project. If Rural Development portion of project funding is:*

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Less than 20 percent | 30 points |
| 2. 20 but less than 50 percent | 20 points |
| 3. 50 but less than 75 percent | 10 points |
| 4. 75 percent or more | 0 points |

Rural Development funds divided by total project costs \$ ____ X 100 = ____% which is Rural Developments portion of project funding

No funds are included as leverage match other than staff in-kind time for administration.

Scoring Criteria: *Size of Grant Request*

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Less than \$100,000 | 25 points |
| 2. \$100,000 to \$200,000 | 15 points |
| 3. More than \$200,000 but not more than \$500,000 | 10 points |

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The grant amount requested is \$50,000.

Scoring Criteria: Indirect cost - Applicant is **not** requesting grant funds to cover their administrative or indirect costs. 5 points
Town of Bedford is not requesting funds for administration. Staff will provide in-kind services for grant administration.

Suggested Performance Criteria:

Suggest one or more relevant criterion to be used to evaluate the performance of the grant project during its operational phase post-award, as benchmarks to assess whether or not the primary goals and objectives proposed in the scope of work are accomplished during the project period. These criteria should relate to the overall project goal of financing and/or assisting small and emerging businesses or conducting business opportunity projects, with a resulting creation or saving of jobs.

 *[Insert Performance Evaluation Criteria]*

Report on how many businesses participated in the program through the workshop, training, or other means of participation. Check back with each participating business in three to five years to see how many employees are there.

Additional Scoring Criteria

Scoring Criteria: Discretionary points - Either the State Director or Administrator may assign up to 50 discretionary points to an application. Assignment of discretionary points must include a written justification. Permissible justifications are geographic distribution of funds, special Secretary of Agriculture initiatives such as Priority Communities, or a state's strategic goals. Discretionary points may only be assigned to initial grants.

However, in the case where two projects have the same score, the State Director may add one point to the project that best fits the State's strategic plan regardless of whether the project is an initial or subsequent grant.

Identified State Strategic Goals

- *Projects that support the USDA's Bio Economy Initiative*
- *Projects that impact locally produced / locally manufactured food networks and/or distribution systems*
- *Projects located in USDA's targeted High Poverty Areas in support of USDA's Poverty Funding Initiative*

Appendices

Appendix A: Organizational Documents

Please attach evidence of Legal Authority and Good-standing (Examples: By-Laws, Articles of Incorporation or Organization, Letter or Certificate of Good Standing from your Secretary of State or equivalent agency).

The Town of Bedford VA Charter is attached.

Appendix B: Latest 3 Years Financial Information

Please attach latest Three (3) years financial statements including, balance sheets, income statements and current audited report if available.

The Town of Bedford [Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports \(ACFR\)](#) for the years 2021, 2022, and 2023 are attached.

Appendix C: Supplemental Funds Verification

Documentation verifying eligible supplemental funds are available and have been committed to the project must be included in your application to qualify for consideration under applicable scoring criterion.

Examples of acceptable documentation include: a signed letter from the source of funds stating the amount of funds, when the funds will be provided, and what the funds can be used for, an executed grant agreement, and a signed resolution from your governing board authorizing the use of a specified amount of funds for the project (if funds will be contributed by the applicant organization).

Appendix D: Letters of Commitment from Businesses to be assisted (include jobs created/supported)
Letters of Support

Four letters from businesses in the downtown project area are attached.



Appendix E: Additional Supporting Documentation

INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

DATE: March 21, 2024

TO: CVPDC Managers/Administrators and/or Intergovernmental Review Designee

FROM: Alec Brebner
Central Virginia Planning District Commission

RE: **Final Disposition of Intergovernmental Review**

Applicant: Town of Bedford

Project: Downtown Strategic Plan

Agency: USDA Rural Development

FINAL DISPOSITION BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT / AGENCY / ORGANIZATION

- Does not wish to comment
- Has no concern and recommends the CVPDC make a favorable comment on the above project.
- Has no concern and submits the attached letter of support to the above project.
- Wishes to express the following concerns that can likely be resolved with a prosper:
- Makes the following recommendations based on concern with the proposal, which should be addressed by the federal agency but are not of sufficient concern to advocate halting the federal action:
- Has significant concern with the application and recommends the CVPDC make an unfavorable comment on the above project for the following reasons:

Authorized Signature: _____ Date: _____

Local Government/Agency/Organization: _____



**Central Virginia Planning
District Commission**
828 Main Street, 12th Floor
Lynchburg, VA 24504
Office: (434) 845-3491
cvpdc.org

CVPDC

March 21, 2024

Mary Zirkle
Director of Planning, Town of Bedford
215 East Main Street
Bedford, VA 24523

**RE: Town of Bedford application for a Rural Business Development Grant through USDA
Rural Development**

Dear Ms. Zirkle:

The Central Virginia Planning District Commission is pleased to offer our support to the Town of Bedford's application for a Rural Business Development Grant through USDA. We received no negative comments from regional or local government representatives. We believe that this will be a positive initiative for the community.

As the Town of Bedford moves forward with this project, the CVPDC looks forward to seeing its development proceed successfully.

Sincerely,

Alec Brebner
Executive Director