

ANNOUNCEMENT

GRANT SOURCE FOR NEBRASKA MUNICIPALITIES: CIVIC AND COMMUNITY CENTER FINANCING FUND

The State of Nebraska, Department of Economic Development, will soon be accepting applications from Nebraska municipalities for grants to support the development of civic centers and community centers. A municipality seeking a grant should complete the enclosed brief preliminary application form and return it to the Department no earlier than February 1 but no later than February 15, 2012. This is the first step in a two-part grant application process. After February 15, the Department will seek more detailed information on eligible grant requests.

Background. Legislation passed in 2011 created the Civic and Community Center Financing Fund. The Fund's purpose is to support the development of civic and community centers throughout Nebraska and to support projects that foster maintenance or growth of communities.

Eligible projects. The fund may be used for the construction of new civic centers or the renovation or expansion of existing civic or community centers, which may include the conversion, rehabilitation, or reuse of historic buildings. The fund may not be used for planning, programming, marketing, or advertising. The definitions of eligible projects are:

- Civic Center—a facility that is primarily used to host conventions, meetings, and cultural events and/or a library.
- Community Center—the traditional center of a community, typically comprised of a cohesive core of residential, civic, religious, and commercial buildings, arranged around a main street and intersecting streets.

Eligible applicants. Most Nebraska municipalities are eligible and may apply for a grant in competition with other municipalities. Not eligible is the City of Omaha, the City of Lincoln, or other municipality that has received funding under the Convention Center Facility Financing Assistance Act or the Sports Arena Facility Financial Assistance Act. A municipality will own and operate the center, directly or under contract, for which a grant is sought.

→ Grant amounts. No grant should amount to more than 50 percent of the total cost of construction, renovation, or expansion. The minimum amount for a grant request is \$10,000. The maximum amount, determined by the population (2010 Census) of a municipality, is:

- Population of 40,000 to 99,999, \$750,000
- Population of 20,000 to 39,999, \$500,000
- Population of 10,000 to 19,999, \$400,000
- Population of 1 to 9,999, \$250,000

Grant Schedule. An eligible municipality completing and returning the enclosed preliminary application form will be sent a final application form after February 15. Final application will need to be made by March 30. The Department will evaluate final application forms soon after they are received. Announcement of grants awarded will occur no later than April 30, 2012.

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PREVIEW OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT WILL BE REQUESTED

**FOR EVALUATION OF PROJECTS FOR GRANT ASSISTANCE FROM
THE CIVIC AND COMMUNITY CENTER FINANCING FUND**

Based on the satisfactory and timely completion of information on the enclosed Preliminary Application Form, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development will request, after February 15, 2012, more detailed information on projects considered preliminarily eligible for grant assistance from the Civic and Community Center Financing Fund.

Criteria for Evaluating Grant Applications. The requested information will relate especially to evaluation criteria called for in the law that created the Fund. Those criteria are as follows:

- **Attraction Impact**—Funding decisions by the Department will be based in part on the likelihood of the project attracting new civic or community activity to Nebraska from outside Nebraska. A project with greater draw from out-of-state will be preferred over a project with less impact.
- **Socioeconomic Impact**—The project's potential for long-term positive impacts on the local and regional economy and society.
- **Financial Support**—Assistance from the Fund must be matched at least equally from local sources. At least 50 percent of the local match must be in cash. Projects with a higher level of local matching funds will be preferred over those with a lower level of matching funds. Neither the local match nor the items listed for grant assistance should include amounts already expended prior to the date of application for grant assistance.
- **Readiness**—The applicant's fiscal and economic capacity to finance the local share and ability to proceed and implement its plan and operate the civic or community center.
- **Project location**—A project must be located in the municipality that applies for the grant.
- **Project planning**—Projects with completed technical assistance and feasibility studies will be preferred to those with no prior planning.

PRELIMINARY APPLICATION FORM

**FOR GRANT ASSISTANCE FROM
THE CIVIC AND COMMUNITY CENTER FINANCING FUND**

Name of Municipality Applying for Grant: _____

Name of Civic Center or Community Center for Which Grant Assistance Is Being Requested
(Existing or Preliminary Name):

Amount of Grant Request (See Grant Amount Limitations in Announcement): _____

Attach a Brief Description of the Center (At Least One Paragraph but Not More than One Page)

Person Preparing Preliminary Application:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

E-Mail Address (If Any): _____

Chief Elected Officer of Municipality Applying for Grant:

Signature: _____

Typed or Printed Name and Title: _____

Date Signed: _____

Return Completed Preliminary Application Form and Brief Description of Center to:

Kevin Andersen
Nebraska Department of Economic Development
P.O. 94666
Lincoln, NE 68509-4666
(402) 471-3775
kevin.s.andersen@nebraska.gov

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