

**2016 Cooperative Business Development Mini Grants**

**Deadline: May 9, 2016**

# Timeline

Call for Proposals: April 14, 2016

Applications Due: May 9, 2016

Expected Awards Made: May 16, 2016

Grant Activities completed no later than September 30, 2016

Final Reports & Reimbursement Requests submitted by October 31, 2016

**NO EXTENSIONS**

**Purpose:** It is often critical to have professional services when beginning or expanding a cooperative business venture and the UNL Nebraska Cooperative Development Center is equipped to provide grants to cooperatives and groups who are in need of assistance in obtaining legal services, accounting, consulting, and other development services. These grants have been designed to provide new and existing businesses with funding to complete the critical stages in business development and expansion.

**Cooperative Business Development Grants** are available to unincorporated cooperative groups, steering committees, and to incorporated cooperatively owned businesses and can be awarded for amounts up to **$1,500**. This grant program is designed for groups or steering committees who are exploring a business idea and want conduct exploratory research and cooperative businesses who are ready to hire professional services (i.e. legal/financial) or develop marketing materials. ***Match is required, and can be in-kind, cash or a combination of both.***

**Eligibility**

*This grant program is to assist in the creation and expansion of for-profit businesses that are cooperatively owned. Non-profit organizations are not eligible for grant funding.*

## Assistance Grants

Eligible Applicants:

* Unincorporated groups/steering committees that are, or will be, located in rural Nebraska. (not available for individuals)
* Incorporated groups (cooperatives, LLC’s, etc.) in rural Nebraska. (not available for individuals)

Eligible Activities Include:

* + Non-administrative business planning assistance, feasibility and market studies, capitalization plans, and technical assistance.
	+ Legal fees for incorporation
	+ Education and training
	+ Travel (not to exceed 20% of the grant total)
	+ Market development, capitalization plans, accounting, and technical assistance
	+ Education and training
	+ Member recruitment activities & materials
	+ Funds may also be used for other expenses the NCDC deems appropriate

**Funding:** These are competitive grants. Funding is limited therefore not all grants or budget items may be funded. **Grants are on a reimbursement basis and require match (in-kind, cash or a combination of both).** Awarded applicants will be reimbursed for grant eligible activities outlined in the grant application, which occur during the grant duration. Please contact NCDC with any questions regarding reimbursement.

**Evaluation:** NCDC’s Review and Selection Committee first reviews all grants. Then this committee makes recommendation to the full Advisory Board for approval.

**NCDC Training Programs:** It is required that grant recipients attend Board of Director Trainings. The Nebraska Cooperative Development Center provides at least one training session per year at

a location that best meets the needs of the participants. Education and training are one of the key elements of starting and sustaining businesses.

**Reporting:** After your project is finished you will need to submit a short final report to UNL - NCDC by **October 31, 2016**. A template for reporting will be provided to all groups receiving a grant.

**How to Apply:** To be considered for funding, your application for a NCDC Cooperative Business Development Grant **MUST** include the following items.

1. Completed and Signed Cover Page (electronic signature is allowed).
2. Answer all application questions.
3. Completed Best Practices and Professional List forms.
4. Completed budget form.
5. Applications must be received electronically by May 9, 2016 by 5:00 pm (CT) or postmarked on or before May 9, 2016. Applications may be submitted electronically or mailed.

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## ADDITIONAL GRANT INFORMATION

* All Grants are reimbursement only
* Only one grant per project in any one fiscal year
* Administrative costs are not eligible for grant support
* Activities such as, salaries, purchasing equipment, buildings, and/or real estate are not eligible

Applicants are encouraged to discuss their project ideas with a Cooperative Development Specialist at NCDC, who can assist in determining eligibility.

# For assistance please contact

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Jim Crandall11854 730 Rd.Holdrege, NE 68949 Phone & Fax: 308-995-3889jcrandall3@unl.edu | Elaine Cranford60E Miller Hall Lincoln, NE 68583-0922Phone: 402-472-1748 Fax 402-472-3460ecranford2@unl.edu |

Nebraska Cooperative Development Center (NCDC) is funded through the USDA Rural Cooperative Development Grant and is a program of UNL’s Agricultural Economics Department.

*NCDC is dedicated to assisting people prosper in rural Nebraska by helping them work together through cooperative business development.*

## 2015 Cooperative Business Development Grant

**Cover Page**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Legal Name of Organization to which award should be made | Project City: Project County: |
| Amount Requesting: (Max $1,500) |
| Name of Primary Contact: Address:Telephone: Fax: Email:Organization Website: | Name of Secondary Contact: Address:Telephone: Fax: Email: |
| Proposed Start Date: | Type of Legal entity if applicable: |
| Duration Requested (number of months, up to four): | Number of individuals in cooperative or group: |
| Signature of Authorized Official: | Date: |
| Authorized Official’s Printed Name | Authorized Official’s Title |

By signing this form we agree that we understand the purpose and costs of this proposed project, that NCDC funds will only be spent on this project, and that we (the applicant) will carry out this project and complete a final report.

*\*If submitting electronically a signature is not required.*

# Questions

*300 word max per question*

1. Provide a brief description of the cooperative/group, its goals and objectives.
2. Provide a brief description on the project that is being proposed. What is the product, process, and target market?
3. What activities have been completed to determine the proposed project’s feasibility?
4. What impact(s) will this project have on the community or communities the proposed project is to take place?
5. Describe the project needs, and resources needed to complete this project.
6. Describe projected results and marketing plans.
7. Provide a timeline for this project.
8. If there is important information regarding this proposal that you were not able to fit into previous sections, add it here. (500 words max)

# Best Practices Form

NCDC believes there are many stages and steps to business development. Many new business ventures require education and assistance during the initial start up. A list of “Best Practices” has been developed to guide groups through the process of starting a new business. The NCDC strongly encourages all grant recipients to follow these “Best Practices” therefore please indicate on the chart below the present status of your group.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **BEST PRACTICES** | **Completed/ On-going** | **In-process** | **Not Applicable** |
| An idea has been discussed among a small group of persons |  |  |  |
| Specific Project ideas have been formulized |  |  |  |
| Steering Committee has been selected |  |  |  |
| Action Plans and timelines have been established by the Steering Committee |  |  |  |
| Board of Directors has been formed |  |  |  |
| Bylaws have been adopted and a Board of Directors has been selected |  |  |  |
| Necessary legal papers have been completed for incorporation |  |  |  |
| Exploratory meetings with potential investors have been initiated |  |  |  |
| Members show commitment by contributing financial obligations |  |  |  |
| Consultants and/or advisors have been identified |  |  |  |
| A feasibility study has been completed |  |  |  |
| A business plan has been competed |  |  |  |
| A market analysis has been completed |  |  |  |
| Personnel have been hired |  |  |  |
| Operations have begun |  |  |  |

# Grant Budget Form

**Please list the specific activities for which you are requesting NCDC funding and the In- kind and/or Cash Match your Cooperative is contributing to the project.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ACTIVITY**(i.e. Supplies, Personnel/Contractors, Travel) | Price Each or Hourly Rate | #Needed/ Hours | Match (In kind/Cash) | **TOTAL PROJECT COSTS** |
| *Example**Activity: Marketing**Website Designer - Develop & Launch Website* | *$150 HR.* | *10* | *$500* | *$2000* |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Total |  |  |  |  |

# Professional List Form

The Nebraska Cooperative Development Center is compiling a list of professionals who have been involved in helping groups and projects such as yours, including attorneys, consultants, who have done feasibility studies, market analysis, business planning; CPA’s etc. Please assist us by providing the names and contact information of any such individuals or organizations that have been involved with your cooperative or group.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Address** | **Phone and email** | **Role In Your Project** |
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