

Technical Assistance Grant Guidelines

Agricultural Products Utilization Commission

Definition

The North Dakota Agricultural Products Utilization Commission (APUC) is pleased to issue an invitation to apply for a Technical Assistance Grant. The Technical Assistance Grant is designed to maintain and expand North Dakota's existing, value added businesses. The grant is intended to help these businesses become more competitive, productive and profitable. Eligible candidates for this grant are companies¹ registered with the North Dakota Secretary of State (SOS), higher education agencies, groups, and individuals that add value to North Dakota agriculture.

As per the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) used to categorize business; this would include companies who have a primary or secondary industrial code of 311 (food manufacturers) or 312 (beverage manufacturers). At its discretion, APUC may consider applications for technical assistance from other value added businesses such as NAICS 111 (crop production) or 112 (animal production). To find the NAICS for your company, use the keyword search on the U.S. Census Bureau web site at <http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html>.

Examples of Eligible Projects

Eligible projects under the Technical Assistance Grant include but are not limited to the following:

- assess needs
- develop plans for improvement
- implement those improvements
- measure the benefits of those improvements

Examples of issues, opportunities or problems that companies may address through these improvements include but are not limited to:

- bringing new products to market
- improving cash flow
- developing more profitable sales
- addressing owner and/or key manager succession
- reducing costs
- conserving floor space
- improving lead time to customers
- improving employee safety
- increasing manufacturing capacity
- improving product quality
- improving processes
- reducing inventory levels
- reducing maintenance costs and down time
- improving employee productivity
- improving the retention of workers

Examples of Non-Eligible Projects

Non-eligible projects under the Technical Assistance Grant include but are not limited to the following:

- acquisition of buildings, equipment and/or vehicles

¹ A Corporate registration number (for in-state owned companies) or a Corporate Certificate of Authority registration number (for out-of-state companies) is provided by the North Dakota Secretary of State (ND SOS). It is required of all companies who are doing business in North Dakota. The Corporate Division of ND SOS can be reached at 701-328-4284 or at 1-800-352-0867, Extension 8-4284.

- capital for the finance / refinance of business loans
- compensation for employees

Parameters

1. A commitment letter addressed to APUC specifying company commitment to the project is required for consideration.
2. APUC may request a third party contractor/consultant to conduct an objective assessment of the company with the ownership and/or key managers. This assessment is part of the application process and is provided at no cost to the company. (The assessment will be scaled to the size of the company and tailored to address the specific needs identified in the company's application.) Information from this assessment is confidential. APUC may also conduct its own visit to the company.
3. The most important improvements for the company will be identified from the results of the assessment. A third party contractor/consultant and the company must develop an agreed to and a clearly defined scope of work, including project cost and a method of measuring the impact of the work.
4. Upon completion, the applicant is responsible for submission of their scope of work (from the third party contractor/consultant) to APUC. This scope of work is an integral part of the overall application for funding from this Technical Assistance Grant.
5. The third party contractor/consultant will provide a brief overview of the visit to APUC and any recommendations for funding.
6. APUC will encourage the third party contractor/consultant to complete its visit and assessment of the applicant within two months following receipt of the initial application from APUC.

Guidelines

1. Generally, proposals are not limited to a specific dollar amount. However, APUC's grant monies are finite, and as a mechanism to optimize opportunities, some categories of grants may have limitations on allowable costs that may be included in the project budget. Grant requests may include an additional fiscal agent administrative fee up to 5 percent of the amount requested, not to exceed \$5,000 for their services.
2. Generally, grant applicants must commit a minimum match dollar investment of 25 percent of the total amount requested from APUC, exclusive of the fiscal agent administrative fee. In-kind support must not exceed 50 percent of the total match funding.
3. Technical Assistance Grants will not fund equipment, salaries or ongoing operational expenses for existing operations.
4. APUC will fund only technical assistance services which are part of an agreed to scope of work between the value-added business and the third party contractor/consultant.
5. Reviews from the third party contractor/consultant may be obtained as part of the application process. These reviews include a company assessment included as part of a company visit. Applicants that obtain these reviews will receive higher priority consideration.
6. Applicants are only eligible for one grant per project.
7. **Applications will be considered on a quarterly basis with submission deadlines of December 1, March 1, June 1, and September 1.**

Please thoroughly review the [APUC Grant Guidelines](#) for a complete understanding of all program requirements.

The Commission reserves the right to accept, reject, or partially fund any grant application.

(Revised 7/2016)