**Rural Transformation Grant Fund**

*Rural Engagement and Investment Program*

**OVERVIEW:**

* Fifty million in available funds from the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds from the American Rescue Plan Act given to the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Rural Economic Development Division to create the Rural Transformation Grant Fund.

**ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:**

* **Units of local government located within Tier 1 and Tier 2 Counties, and Rural Census Tracts in Tier 3 Counties.**
* Will prioritize disbursing grants to units of local government serving populations that are negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic at a disproportionate level.

**ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES:**

*All activities must have a direct link to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

**Downtown Revitalization Program – all activities must occur in a downtown qualified census track under this program**

* Improvements to publicly owned properties
* Improvements to publicly owned property that will leverage the rehabilitation of privately owned existing buildings
* Public improvements and planning studies to address negative economic impacts of the pandemic
* Community, county or regional training and technical assistance, organized and sponsored by a local government
* Public sector planning
* Implementation of publicly owned improvements that will aid impacted industries in the travel, tourism, and hospitality sectors or businesses that experienced 8% employment loss due to the pandemic.

**Resilient Neighborhoods Program**

* Affordable permanent housing
* Neighborhood improvements and facilities
* Small business assistance
* Creation of healthy living initiatives
* The rehabilitation of an existing building to allow mixed use of residential and commercial spaces

**Community Enhancement for Economic Growth Program**

* Property acquisition
* Secure abandoned properties
* Environmental remediation
* Demolition *paired* with neighborhood revitalization
* Lot cleanup and greening

**Rural Community Capacity Building Program**

* Best practices research activities – learning from other communities of similar sizes
* Use of a consultant to produce community branding and/or marketing plan
* Development of visual renderings of proposed projects
* The development of community, county or regional training and technical assistance for communities to leverage asset based economic development
* The development of plans for local units of government

**FUNDING AMOUNTS:**

* The maximum grant amount is $950,000 per grantee, with some restrictions for specific activities.
* There is no minimum grant amount

**APPLICATION PROCESS:**

Apply through the Rural Connect Portal and get more information about the program at: <https://www.nccommerce.com/grants-incentives/rural-transformation-grants>

**Application Deadlines**

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| --- | --- |
| March 16, 2022 | Open Grant Cycle 1 |
| May 2, 2022 | Close Grant Cycle 1 |
| June 15, 2022 | Announce Grant Awards 1 |
| September 1, 2022 | Open Grant Cycle 2 |
| November 1, 2022 | Close Grant Cycle 2 |
| December 16, 2022 | Announce Grant Awards 2 |
| \*Program Year 2023 will follow the same timeline as long as funds are available. |

**APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Project must address a Covid-19 public health or economic impact
2. Describe why this project is the best solution to address this Covid-19 impact
3. Define the project area
4. Describe the scope of the proposed project
5. Describe the project timeline
6. Describe the project team
7. Describe the anticipated outcomes
8. Describe the project sustainability

**MONITORING:**

REDD will monitor the project through mechanisms, including review of annual reports received from the grant recipient, through phone/email/letter correspondence, through receipt of all published press articles about the project as provided to REDD by the local government, and through on-site monitoring visits.