

ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS
GUIDE TO GRANTS THAT
CAN FUND KEY INITIATIVES

BY GOLDEN SHOVEL AGENCY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dear Economic Developer,

You wear a lot of hats and are tasked with transforming your community - something that has never been easy. In conversations with hundreds of economic developers over the past couple of years, it has become clear that one of the most significant hurdles is securing the funding necessary to launch campaigns and fund the programs and development required to make an impact. We have been asked about specific funding programs, how to raise money for quality of life, BR&E, workforce and product development needs, among others. This grant-focused whitepaper aims to answer some of these questions and to provide you with the foundation necessary to begin securing funding for initiatives that will positively transform your community.

To our clients - you know we fight for you and with you. We have the privilege of working with economic developers and community leaders as they plan for their community's growth and serving as a partner in implementing those strategies. It's an honor to do so.

When Roseville, Minnesota, wanted to help local businesses recover from COVID, they turned to GSA to develop a Choose Local campaign that integrated BR&E efforts and local marketing in a way that provides businesses with in-person support. As a result of the campaign, businesses that were on the verge of closing have remained open and grown exponentially.

When York County, Nebraska, needed to recruit more companies to rural Nebraska, GSA created a marketing strategy that included marketing available sites using our virtual reality technology. The project has been so successful that they have filled their commercial space and are now in the process of developing new product.

When Burien, Washington, wanted to develop an inclusive economic development marketing strategy, GSA worked with community stakeholders to develop a branding, marketing and advertising strategy that, once implemented, has led to consistent requests from business owner and artists looking for space within the Seattle region - people who were previously unaware of the city and what it has to offer.

These are just a few examples of how GSA is helping economic developers to transform their communities. We believe in you and want to come alongside you and help you achieve your goals. If funding stands in the way, we encourage you to identify the grants within this whitepaper that can be used for your specific needs and then contact us for more information or assistance.

Wishing You the Best,

Bethany Quinn, VP Strategy and Content Development • Golden Shovel Agency

GENERAL GRANTS

The majority of available grants have parameters around how they can be used. For example, they will fund specific types of infrastructure projects or workforce development programs serving a certain population. We highlight many of them in the coming pages. First, the below grants offer high flexibility on how funds will be used. **Economic developers with creative or unique ideas should consider applying for one of the below grants and finding ways to use them to further community development goals.**

[2021-2023 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RNTA](#)

The Department of Commerce is awarding organizations up to \$1,500,000 that can provide cutting-edge ideas to promote job growth, private investment, and overall economic development in regions experiencing economic hardships. Currently, there is no closing date for this grant. However, applicants must submit a viable concept proposal and a fully completed application to be considered for this grant.

[FY 2021 - 2023 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH AND NATIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE](#)

The Economic Development Administration is a branch of the Department of Commerce that focuses on creating jobs and projects to attract investment. This particular grant emphasizes research, evaluation, and technical assistance.

In particular, the EDA is looking for new and creative ways to promote economic prosperity in rural or urban areas that have historically needed more funding for technical and research programs. The award ceiling for this grant is \$1.5 million, and there is no hard deadline for submissions, meaning that applications will continuously be processed until another assistance program is released or funds are exhausted.

GROW YOUR WORKFORCE & TALENT POOL THROUGH WORKFORCE-SPECIFIC GRANTS

Talent recruitment and workforce development is top of mind for economic developers looking to meet the needs of growing companies while ensuring their community can support additional business growth and attraction. Those who are fortunate to have strong partnerships with local community colleges may find that programs are already in place to facilitate low or no-cost workforce development programs. Still, augmenting those programs with help from federal grants is a wise strategy when building a talent pipeline.

Golden Shovel Agency is working with economic developers who are actively recruiting in high school, for example, and creating internship and apprenticeship programs designed to engage the community's youth. In York County, Manufacturing Day events turned into recruitment and internship opportunities, something YCDC Executive Director Lisa Hurley is looking to expand upon. **“Internships are part of a holistic workforce development and attraction strategy. While we are actively advertising and promoting York County on the workforce attraction side, we know it is important to build our talent from within as well,” she said.** Fortunately, there are grant programs that can make it easier to create these types of programs, including programs that can be conducted remotely. Rural communities may benefit, for example, by exploring the USDA's Distance Learning Grants that can help to pay for audio/visual and computer equipment, along with broadband.

WORKFORCE-SPECIFIC GRANTS

Distance Learning Grants

The USDA created this program to assist remote communities in ensuring they are sufficiently equipped with the technology to support their rural economies. The Rural Development department has allocated \$60 million worth of funding to help with this.

- The funds are for some of the following:
 - Audio and video technology
 - Training in the use of this technology
 - Infrastructure upgrades such as cell phone towers or broadband internet hubs