



Technical Assistance Grant Guidelines Agricultural Products Utilization Commission

Definition

The Agricultural Products Utilization Commission (APUC) 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. An eligible candidate for this grant is an existing company located, operated and registered¹ in North Dakota that adds value to agricultural products. As per the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS – pronounced “nakes”) 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

The Technical Assistance Grant is designed to help value added businesses: (1) assess their needs; (2) develop plans for improvement; (3) implement those improvements; and (4) measure the benefits of those improvements.

Examples of issues, opportunities or problems that companies may address through these improvements include:

- 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

Available funds from the Technical Assistance Grant may not be used for 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

The maximum Technical Assistance Grant award available to each company is \$25,000, plus an additional Fiscal Agent fee up to 5%, not to exceed \$3,000 for their services paid for by APUC. Companies are only eligible for one grant per year from this program.

The most successful recipients of APUC support are those who also invest in their projects. As a result, APUC will look most favorably on the applications that provide company matching dollars and support. **For every two dollars of APUC support requested, the business should provide one dollar in match funding, equaling at least 50% of the total project cost.** In-kind supports can be substituted for financial cash match but should be no more than fifty percent of the total match.

A commitment letter addressed to APUC specifying company commitment to the project is required for consideration.

Qualified companies interested in this grant may download an application from the APUC Web site at: www.nd.gov/ndda/apuc.

Upon receipt of the company's application, 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.

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.

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.

The third party contractor/consultant will provide a brief overview of the visit to APUC and any recommendations for funding.

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.

APUC will make the final determination of a grant award and the amount of that award. Decisions will normally be made during their quarterly meetings.

Guidelines

1. 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.

2. **Completed applications (assessment & scope of work finalized) will be considered on a quarterly basis with the deadlines on December 1, March 1, June 1, and September 1.**
3. 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.
4. Generally, grants are not to exceed 1-year.
5. Grants are limited to projects located in North Dakota.
6. The applicant(s) may be asked to make a presentation to the full Commission.
7. Each grant application will be considered on an individual basis and on its own merits.
8. Applicants must arrange for a fiscal agent – an organization (e.g. economic development organization, regional council, accountant, or bank) who can receive funds directly from APUC and release those funds to the company upon proof of expenditures related to the funded project.

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