



Building Collaborative Communities Program Guidelines

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is pleased to announce that funding is available for the *Building Collaborative Communities* program for Fiscal Year 2016-2017

Introduction

In the global economy, regions must strive to work together to serve as an economic unit. Economic boundaries are not defined by political boundaries; rather they are defined by shared assets or other commonalities (local economies, interests, etc). Research shows that in areas around the country where localities work together cooperatively, economic competitiveness is enhanced. Quality of life indicators such as income disparity between localities, area median income, and job creation are more positive in areas that interact on a regional level. Regional, community-based strategies that capitalize upon the unique assets of communities offer stronger opportunities for success and long-term sustainability. Location decisions made by businesses are based on a number of factors, ranging from quality of life, local amenities, supply chain availability, and workforce competency to name a few—low on the list of considerations, if at all, are geographical boundaries. Collaborative efforts represent the best opportunity for economic growth and prosperity.

Program Objectives

What is the Building Collaborative Communities (BCC) Program?

The primary objective of the program is to promote the development of regional economic networks and identify strategies to improve the local/regional economy and quality of life by building the area's capacity to adapt to economic change.

What are key desired program outcomes?

- Significant regional approaches that will spur regional economic growth.
- Improved capacity to respond to regional economic development priorities.
- Increased collaboration and investment from a broad and diverse contingent of stakeholder groups.
- Collaboration around asset development

General Information

Virginia's Five Pillars

In FY 2017 a higher priority will be given to proposals that incorporate at least one of Virginia's "Five Pillars" in identifying methods to stimulate economic development (the fifth pillar infrastructure is not an eligible BCC project activity) in their region. Four of the Five Pillars are:

1. Workforce Development
2. Entrepreneurship
3. Pro-Business Climate
4. Growth Sectors

Priority will be given to proposals that address the following areas:

1. Development of asset-based projects that will foster regional economic growth.
2. Developing a regional ecosystem to encourage small business and entrepreneurship development, as well as business retention.
3. Developing the region's workforce with in-demand skill sets to meet current and future business needs.
4. Development of new networks and partnerships for economic competitiveness.
- 5.

Distressed Areas

Proposals which target at least one unit of local government that has been classified as Distressed using the criteria described below are a priority of the program and will receive additional consideration during the review and evaluation process.

The measures of **Persons in Poverty**, **Median Income per Household**, and **Average Unemployment Rates** have been used to assess the level of stress for all localities in the Commonwealth. Localities received two points for each factor in which they met distressed levels, one point for each factor at Transitional levels, and no points for each factor at Competitive levels. Localities with 5 or more points are considered Distressed.

Persons in Poverty

(2014 Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau)- Distressed: 150% or greater than statewide figure (or 16.95% or higher)

Transitional: Greater than the statewide figure of 11.3% but less than 16.95%

Competitive: Equal to or less than statewide figure of 11.3%

Median Income per Household

(2014; U.S. Census data

Distressed: 70% or less of statewide figure (or \$43,922 or less)

Transitional: Less than the statewide figure of \$62,745 but greater than \$43,922
Competitive: Equal to or greater than statewide figure of \$62,745

Average Unemployment Rates

(2015 data; Virginia Employment Commission)-

Distressed: 150% or greater than statewide figure (or 7.8% or higher)
Transitional: Greater than the statewide figure of 5.2% but less than 7.8%
Competitive: Less than or equal to statewide figure of 5.2%

Utilizing these measures, the following localities are classified as Distressed.

Accomack County	Halifax County	Portsmouth city
Bristol city	Harrisonburg city	Prince Edward County
Brunswick County	Henry County	Radford city
Buchanan County	Hopewell city	Richmond city
Buckingham County	Lee County	Roanoke city
Buena Vista city	Lexington city	Russell County
Carroll County	Lunenburg County	Scott County
Charlotte County	Lynchburg city	Smyth County
Covington city	Martinsville city	Tazewell County
Danville city	Mecklenburg County	Waynesboro city
Dickenson County	Norfolk city	Wise County
Emporia city	Northampton County	
Franklin city	Norton city	
Galax city	Page County	
Grayson County	Patrick County	
Greensville County	Petersburg city	

Eligible Applicants

- Units of local government
- Regional Partnerships
- Planning District Commissions
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Economic Development Organizations

An application must include a minimum of at least two localities (counties, cities, towns). A parent county will be considered eligible if partnering with at least two towns or organized unincorporated areas. Locality can be the lead applicant on only one proposal. Localities can participate in no more than two eligible projects, but have to be different types.

Multiple proposals including the same locality will not be considered. Projects building upon previous efforts, such as implementation of recommended strategies, are eligible. Proposals will not be accepted for any previously funded projects for the same regional boundaries.

For previous grantees* an expansion of an existing regional boundary is only eligible if the new boundary includes at least two additional localities; please note awarded funds will be limited to the areas of expansion. Projects viewed as a duplication of ongoing or recent efforts or that propose to use funding as a substitute or replacement of other funding will not be considered.

Eligible Projects

- Capacity building: to support strategies that will build capacity in a region to develop a competitive and sustainable regional economic development network to plan for and take advantage of economic development opportunities and undertake economic development initiatives. This process should include a broad and diverse base of stakeholders such as local governments, planning district commissions, private business, nonprofits, civic, and philanthropic organizations, etc.
- Regional planning: support strategies for an assessment of the region's economic competitiveness (i.e. workforce development, asset-based development, small business and entrepreneurship, business retention, etc.) resulting in the development of a comprehensive economic development plan that will guide regional economic development activities. This process should include a broad and diverse base of stakeholders such as private businesses, educational and civic leadership in addition to local government leaders.
- Regional Project: Implementation of regional economic development initiative from a comprehensive economic development strategy/strategic plan.

Ineligible Projects

1. Duplication of ongoing or recent efforts
2. Use of funding as a substitute, offset or replacement of other funding
3. Infrastructure or capital project investment

Funding and Match

- Up to \$200,000 will be available for funding for the Building Collaborative Communities program.

Projects are eligible for funding up to a maximum amount as follows:

- Capacity Building: \$25,000
- Regional Planning: \$40,000
- Regional Project: \$70,000

*Note: Capacity building and Regional planning grants

Applicants are required to have a **cash match of at least 25 percent** of the BCC request. Documentation showing commitment of this match must be submitted with the application. Matching funds may include sources such as State, local, and private resources. All matching funds must be available for the completion of tasks under this program. Activities already underway that can be specifically attributable to supporting the project may be proposed; however, there must be a clear linkage to support this claim in the proposal.

Submission

The deadline for submission is **Friday, May 20, 2016**. All proposals must contain direct responses to all required items and must provide well organized information in the form of complete sentences and proper paragraphs. Only relevant attachments should be included and these should be organized as requested. **Please note that applications must be submitted electronically through the Agency's Centralized Application and Management System (CAMS)**. To access CAMS, visit the website at www.dhcd.virginia.gov and click on the CAMS icon in the upper-right hand corner. You may then create a locality profile, add staff members, and access the BCC program using the APPLY button. **Internet Explorer or Chrome are the recommended browsers for CAMS**. Remember to SAVE often.

NOTE: If you are not yet registered as a CAMS user, we **strongly** recommend you register well before the application deadline.

Anticipated Award Timeline

Selected applicants should anticipate award notification by early August, 2016. Project activities should be slated to begin by early September, 2016. Activities should expect to Completed by June 16, 2017

Project Budget Information

Eligible Costs

Administration costs are limited to five percent of the total *Building Collaborative Communities* program funds. Typical administrative costs include: advertising, audit services, legal expenses, printing and postage, workshop expenses, and general project administration. The largest single administrative cost item is typically general project administration. An applicant may administer their project or contract with a consultant.

Pay for Performance

Following the award of funds, grantees must prepare a project budget using a prescribed format. This budget must reflect current budget activities and funding sources (both *Building Collaborative Communities* program and leverage funds). All *Building Collaborative Communities* administrative costs are performance-based, which will only allow costs to be paid after the attainment of pre-determined thresholds. These are negotiated between the Commonwealth and the successful grantee after the completion of the Project Management Plan (a management tool that enables the grantee and its partners to know where the project is going and how it will get there). The payment thresholds will outline the respective tasks and funding available for request upon completion of the task.

Additional Information

The Commonwealth reserves the right to negotiate terms of an award offer, to include changes to the amount of funding requested, restructuring of proposed activities, revisions to the suggested target area, and other changes as deemed necessary.

Proposal Criteria

Project Area Selection

Regional collaboration is at the core of this program. Proposals should seek to develop place-based strategies without regard to previously established geographical, political, or membership boundaries. Projects should strive to “stretch” beyond the traditional boundaries and exceed the minimum required for localities in establishing a region in an effort to create new partnerships and relationships.

Project Needs

Proposals must clearly identify the underlying regional economic needs and assess the likelihood that activities can be completed and later implemented to ultimately lead to measurable long-term impact on the community.

Previously funded BCC applicants must discuss the extent of accomplishments under the prior BCC award. This will include a description of progress in meeting the milestones, products, and activities of the previous award. Any new products and outcomes must be separate and distinct from those in the previous BCC project and not have any duplication or overlap. Prior grantees must also discuss the rationale for providing additional funding and show why additional funding is critical.

Readiness

Projects should be ready to implement upon award notification and applicants should plan to complete all tasks by June 20, 2017. Applicants should identify any barriers to implementation.

There must be a strong rationale as to why the undertaking of this program is timely and appropriate.

Stakeholder Involvement

Successful proposals will include the commitment of a broad and diverse base of stakeholders. Strong participation from private sector entities, including local industry and business, local leaders, government officials, educational institutions, appropriate membership organizations, economic developers, community advocates, nonprofits, and others as necessary, is essential. Stakeholder involvement should include representatives from traditionally under-represented demographic groups in the collaborative region. The formation of a Project Management Team to oversee the project will be required. The Team is made up of stakeholders who have direct responsibility or oversight of specific activities necessary for the successful completion of the project.