



Office of the Governor

Business Assistance Division

Funding Announcement:

Office of Small Business Assistance

Small Business Service Provider Grant

May 5, 2016

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Office of Small Business Assistance

Small Business Service Provider Grant (SPG)

The Governor’s Office of Small Business Assistance (OSBA) works to establish the State of Texas as the premier place to start, grow and sustain a business. The Small Business Division executes a series of statewide initiatives, disseminating resources and information, identifying legal and financial barriers, and creating partnerships. Through collaborative efforts with federal, state and local agencies and partners, the Governor’s Office assists entrepreneurs and businesses with expansion programs, promotion, policies, strategies and outlooks for business development to help them succeed in the global marketplace.

OSBA is accepting applications for programs that enable Texas-based small business service providers to enhance and diversify projects and activities benefiting the State’s small and historically underutilized businesses (HUBs). The grants will afford small business service providers a greater degree of flexibility and creativity in their portfolio of offerings to small businesses and HUBs.

If you are interested in applying for a grant under this program, follow the four-step process outlined below.

- **Step One - Review the Process:** Get familiar with the OSBA funding announcement and the process used for this particular program.
- **Step Two - Consider the Requirements:** Consider the eligibility requirements as well as what will be required of successful applicants.
- **Step Three - Apply in eGrants:** Compile and create your grant application. To understand how to apply online or to register for the system go to <https://eGrants.gov.texas.gov>.
- **Step Four - Funding Decisions and Grant Acceptance:** Await the funding decision, which is provided through a grant award or other notice from OSBA. If you receive an award, complete the acceptance process to access funds.

Step 1: Review the Process

Timeline

Action	Date
Online Application Opening Date	May 5, 2016
Final Date to Submit an Application to OSBA	June 6, 2016 at 5:00 PM CST
Earliest Project Start Date	June 13, 2016
Latest Project End Date	October 31, 2016

Submission Method

Applicants will respond to this funding announcement by creating an application in eGrants <https://eGrants.gov.texas.gov>.

Step 2: Consider the Requirements

Organizational Eligibility

Applications may be submitted by the following types of agencies that are organized and based in Texas:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Council of Government (COG)
- County Government
- Economic Development Organization
- Incubator/Accelerator (non-profit corporation)
- Junior College - Public
- Nonprofit Corporation (not tax exempt)
- Nonprofit Corporation (tax exempt)
- Senior University – Public (Federal Fund Source)
- Texas State Technical College System
- Tribal Government
- Unit of Local Government (City, Town, or Village)

Funding and Project Period Limits

Funding Limits. Each organization is limited to a \$10,000 maximum budget request in their application.

Project Period. Grant projects must begin on or after June 13, 2016 and unless specially approved by the OSBA, must be completed by October 31, 2016.

Available Funding. It is anticipated that up to \$100,000 will be available for this grant program.

Source of Funding. The grant funds are available to the OSBA via the Texas Workforce Commission federal grant award. Federal funds are authorized under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)/Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Dislocated Worker Formula Grant programs (CFA 17.278) which help dislocated workers become reemployed through job search assistance and/or training that builds their occupational skills to meet labor market needs. All awards are subject to the availability of the appropriated federal funds and receipt of those funds by the OOG.

Cost Reimbursement

The Small Business Service Provider Grant is administered on a cost reimbursement basis. Expenditures must be incurred and paid by the grantee before being submitted for reimbursement. Advances are not permitted. All claims for reimbursement must be submitted online using the eGrants system. Grant applicant must have the ability to provide interim bridge funds requisite to the successful implementation of the project. Reimbursement is limited to costs that are incurred and paid during the term of the grant award.

Match Requirement

There is no match requirement under this grant program.

Eligible Activities and Costs

Grant funds may be used by applicants to enhance and diversify programs that will benefit small businesses and HUBs. While the OSBA is open to creative projects to accomplish the grant program goals, the grant project may include, but is not limited to, the following purpose areas:

- Develop and host a training program or workshop
- Host additional training programs or workshops that are already developed
- Develop and host programs to raise awareness and provide opportunities for obtaining equity capital and other forms of financial assistance
- Develop, publish and distribute brochures and other useful information

Allowable costs must be for direct costs only.

Grant funds may not be used to support the following services, activities, and costs:

- Food and beverages (including alcohol)
- Promotional items and memorabilia (including models, gifts and souvenirs)
- International travel
- Fundraising
- Construction
- Lobbying
- Supplanting
- Indirect Costs
- Costs to support any activity that has as its objective funding of sectarian worship, instruction, or proselytization
- Costs incurred prior to the commencement or after the termination of this Grant Award
- Costs of entertainment, including amusement, diversion, social activities and any costs directly associated with those costs (such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation and gratuities)
- Outreach and promotional materials that solely promote an organization

Reporting Requirements

Grantees will be required to submit financial status reports and progress reports via eGrants.

Step 3: Apply via eGrants

Basics

To apply for this grant, you must complete or make sure you have already completed some standard requirements. The following are needed to apply within eGrants:

- Applicants must have or register for an account in eGrants at <https://eGrants.gov.texas.gov>.

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- Applicants will be required to enter their 9-digit State Payee Identification Number [Employer Identification Number (EIN) or Vendor ID] to begin an application.
- Applicants will be required to enter basic organizational information on the *Profile.Details* Tab in eGrants, including contact information for four grant officials.
- Applicants must provide additional information for the application as outlined within this funding announcement.

If additional help is needed registering for accounts in eGrants, contact the eGrants help desk at eGrants@gov.texas.gov or (512) 463-1919.

Project-Specific Questions

The eGrants system will provide additional information about the requirements of applying and contents of the application. Answer these questions in Section 1, Project-Specific Questions under the Narrative tab. The following are key aspects to consider:

Community Type. Grant applicants who will positively impact small business owners and HUBs in rural areas of Texas will receive preference under this program. Indicate if the community to be served is “Urban” or “Rural” according to the definition from the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census:

To qualify as an urban area, the territory identified according to criteria must encompass at least 2,500 people, at least 1,500 of which reside outside institutional group quarters. The Census Bureau identifies two types of urban areas:

- Urbanized Areas (UAs) of 50,000 or more people;
- Urban Clusters (UCs) of at least 2,500 and less than 50,000 people.

“Rural” encompasses all population, housing units, and territory located outside of UAs and UCs.

Unique Small Business Service Providers. Grant applicants must indicate the number of Unique Small Business Service Providers (USBSPs) involved in the implementation of this project. The definition of the unique small business service providers is the unduplicated count of the number of small businesses service provider organizations whose mission is to assist small businesses and HUBs. OSBA encourages collaborating or partnering with other small business service providers to implement this project.

Growth Rate of Economy in Coverage Area. Grant applicant must indicate the percentage (%) of growth rate of the economy in the coverage area (over the past year). OSBA values projects that will be located in areas of low or negative economic growth. Regional economic growth rates are located on the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts’ Regional Economic Data page: <http://texasahead.org/regionalrpts/>.

Regional Unemployment Rate. Grant applicant must indicate the percentage (%) of region’s unemployment rate. OSBA values projects that will be located in communities with high unemployment rates. Regional unemployment rates can be found on the Texas Workforce Commission’s Labor Market Information page: <http://www.tracer2.com/cgi/dataanalysis/AreaSelection.asp?tableName=Laborforce>.

Natural Disaster or Adverse Economic Events. Grant applicants must indicate if their region has experienced natural disaster or an adverse economic event within the past three years (on or after January 1, 2013). If so, applicants must describe the impact these events have had on their community. OSBA wants to support communities that have been negatively affected by natural disasters or adverse economic events.

Number of Small Business Initiatives Awarded. Grant applicants must indicate the number of Office of the Governor Small Business Initiatives, including Governor's Small Business Forums and Governor's Small Business Workshops, awarded to their organization within the past five years (on or after January 1, 2011). To ensure that OSBA initiatives are most widely distributed throughout the state and to encourage the development and capacity of service providers, OSBA wants to make grants to applicants who have not previously received an award from OSBA.

Project Probability. Applicant must indicate whether they will complete the project execution and spending on or before October 31, 2016. Applicants should submit strong proof of project planning, including budgets and other supplemental information.

Project Narrative

Within eGrants, applicants will complete several narrative fields. The application sections, along with specific instructions and minimum requirements for each section, are described below:

Project Abstract. Provide a brief summary of the proposed project. Be sure that the summary is easy to understand by a person not familiar with your project. (Limit to 1500 characters.)

Problem Statement. Provide a description of the nature and scope of the problem that this project will address. This must be a statement of the core, underlying problem. A lack of resources is not, in and of itself, a problem.

Supporting Data. Provide supporting data, including baseline statistics and the sources of your data, to provide evidence that the problem exists, its size and scope, and its effects on the target population. Use data most specific to the problem identified. For example, if it is a county-specific issue, use county-specific data, if available.

Project Approach & Activities. Provide the core information needed to understand the methodologies, approaches, and activities to be employed by the project. A reader should also be able to understand how the approach ties to solving the stated problem. Additionally, the following may be included as part of your response:

- Explain how the project will address key small business and HUB obstacles for which funding is sought.
- How will the applicant organization partner with other agencies/organizations to address identified needs of small business and HUBs?
- What is the geographic reach of this project? Is this a city, county or regional program?

Capacity & Capabilities. Describe the applicant organization's background as well as organizational and staff capabilities and qualifications to carry out this specific project using the methods provided above. Additionally, for this grant program, be sure to include the following items:

- Provide description of the team and necessary staff and role of each in achieving the project's goals.
- List any training or certifications received that have prepared or will prepare staff to properly execute stated program goals.
- If a similar project had been previously executed by this organization, please provide the project's output and outcomes.

Target Group. Describe the population that this project plans to help or support. Describe the specific geographic and demographic populations to be impacted, affected, or helped by this project. Be specific and use supporting data.

Step 4: Funding Decisions and Grant Acceptance

Funding Decisions

OSBA applications will be submitted by eligible small business service provider organizations via the eGrants system. These applications will be reviewed for completeness, adherence to programmatic guidelines, feasibility, project specific questions, project narrative responses and how well the proposed application meets the goals of the grant program.

Preference will be given to applications whose projects will benefit rural areas of Texas. The Office of the Governor makes the final decision whether to award a grant and all grant decisions rest completely within the discretionary authority of the agency. The decisions made are final and are not subject to appeal.

Grant Acceptance

The OSBA will notify the applicant of the award decision. If selected, the OOG will issue a grant award notice. The award notice will provide all of the terms, conditions and requirements of the grant. Release of the final grant award is contingent on the OOG's receipt of the applicant's acceptance of the grant award.