



The Rural Economic Development Division, as authorized under N.C.G.S. 143B-472.127, provides grants to local government units to support economic development activity that will lead to the creation of new, full-time jobs. The program gives priority to projects located in the 80 most distressed counties in the state; and resident companies as defined in N.C.G.S. 143B-472 (a) 4.

PROGRAM CATEGORIES

Rural Building Reuse—Three categories of funding are available for 1) the renovation of vacant buildings, 2) the renovation or expansion of a building occupied by an existing North Carolina company wishing to expand in their current location and 3) the renovation, expansion or construction of health care facilities that will lead to the direct creation of new, full-time jobs.

Rural Infrastructure—Funding is available for publicly-owned infrastructure including water, sewer, electric, broadband, rail, and road improvements that will lead to the direct creation of new, full-time jobs.

HOW TO APPLY

Funding Availability and Target Industry Projects

The potential funding available for each project will be assessed through analysis of the project and will be based upon the project’s location, the quantity and quality of jobs committed, the overall economic impact of the project, and at the discretion of the Rural Infrastructure Authority.

Projects that meet all the criteria below may receive the highest priority consideration:

- Located in a Tier 1 or Tier 2 county,*
- Meet or exceed the county average annual wage,*
- Identified as a Target Industry (see table below),
- Offer at least 50% employer-paid health insurance
- Will create a significant number of new, full-time jobs

*Check County Tier Designations and County Average Private Sector Wages: [County Tier Designation and County Average Wages](#)

Target industries are identified in the table below. The first step in assisting target industry projects begins with the developers at the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC). EDPNC Representatives will guide the local government and business through the initial information gathering phase of the project and EDPNC will refer the project to Commerce. Applicants may find more information about the EDPNC at www.edpnc.com.

Target Industries
Aerospace/Aviation/Defense
Automotive/Truck/Heavy Equipment
Agriculture/Forestry/Food
Biotech/Life Sciences
Business and Financial Services
Energy
Information Technology
Manufacturing (Chemical/Furniture/Metals/Plastics/Textiles)
Other Headquarters

Conference Call

The application process requires a pre-application conference call. For a target industry projects, the conference call will be conducted after the project’s referral to Commerce is complete.

- To request a pre-application conference call, submit pages 6-10 of this application package along with at least two proposed dates/times for the call to the appropriate program manager.
- The local government, business owner, and property owner (Building Reuse) are required to be on the call. Other project partners may also participate.
- Once the conference call is complete, eligible applicants should submit the full application package—pages 6-10 of this including any revisions discussed in the pre-application conference call, along with the documents requested in Tabs 1-5 on pages 4-5 of this application package.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- **Rural Building Reuse**—Eligible applicants are units of local government located in Tier 1 or Tier 2 counties, and rural census tracts in Tier 3 counties. As authorized in N.C.G.S. 143B-472.127(a)(2), a rural census tract[†] is an area having a population density of less than 500 people per square mile in accordance with the most recent decennial federal census.
- **Rural Infrastructure**—Eligible applicants are units of local government with priority given to the Tier 1 and Tier 2 counties.

[†]Check census tracts at: [Rural Census Tract Map](#)

BUILDING REUSE ELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND EXPENSES

Vacant Building Category

- renovation of buildings that have been vacant for at least three months prior to application deadline
- initial upfit of a shell building is eligible if the building is at least 5 years old and has never been occupied
- only renovations within the existing footprint are eligible

Existing Business Building Category

- buildings occupied for at least 12 months by one of a business identified as a target industry (see table on page 1)
- jobs are required to meet the county wage standard and provide 50% paid health insurance
- renovation within the existing footprint and connected additions are eligible

Rural Health Category

- new construction, renovation, or expansion of health care facilities
- NC licensure required for participating health care companies

Eligible Expenses – Building Reuse, All Categories

- improvements to real property, including, but not limited to: materials and labor to install HVAC, electrical, plumbing, fire alarm/suppression system, roofing, flooring, carpentry, drywall, paint, etc.
- a company owned or operated by any project partner may not be used as a contractor for the renovation project unless the company holds a valid NC General Contractors license. A copy of the company's NC General Contractor's license must be included in Tab 3 of the application materials

Ineligible Expenses – Building Reuse, All Categories

- the following are examples of prohibited expenses and may not be submitted for reimbursement or to meet the matching funds requirement: building purchase, design costs, engineering costs, permit fees, surveys, legal fees, machinery & equipment, cranes, security, telephone, and computer hardware and software, solar panels, signage, landscaping, silo and other ancillary structures, furnishings, paving, fencing, kitchen equipment, and refrigeration equipment. This list is not comprehensive and specific items of concern should be discussed with program staff.
- renovations for housing or government uses are not eligible

INFRASTRUCTURE ELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND EXPENSES

- construct public infrastructure improvements
- upgrade or repair of public drinking water or wastewater treatment plants
- upgrade, extensions, or repair of public water or sewer lines
- publicly owned natural gas lines (requires an executed Pipeline Construction, Operating and Resale Agreement)
- installation or extension of public broadband infrastructure
- construction of publicly owned access roads not funded or owned by the Department of Transportation
- construction of public rail spur improvements

Eligible Expenses – Infrastructure

- eligible expenses include planning, materials, labor, and administration to complete public infrastructure improvements

Ineligible Expenses – Infrastructure

- privately owned infrastructure improvements
- projects that address building construction
- land acquisition costs or fees with the exception those associated with public easements for the project

JOB CREATION REQUIREMENTS

- Applicants must show that the improvements will result in the creation of new, full-time jobs in the private sector within 18 months of the grant award. Part-time, Full-Time Equivalents (FTE) positions, or contract and consulting jobs are ineligible.
- Each position must be filled with one full-time employee. Full-time employment is defined as one person working at least 35 hours per week, whose wages are subject to withholding, and who is employed in a permanent position.
- Priority will be given to projects that offer higher salaries/wages and provide at least 50% employer-paid health benefits to employees.
- The company must pay North Carolina Unemployment Insurance on each employee for whom a job is committed.
- The company will be expected to maintain all existing full-time jobs in North Carolina reported at the time of application (baseline) plus create the new, full-time jobs committed.
- The baseline will be established using the most recently filed NCUI 101 Form filed with the NC Department of Commerce Division of Employment Security at the time of application submittal.
- To meet the terms of the grant the company must maintain the baseline number plus the new, full-time jobs concurrently for at least six consecutive months.
- All participating companies must agree to provide the local government and the Department of Commerce access to company employment records necessary to verify the creation of new jobs.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REQUIREMENTS & LIABILITIES

- The local government will coordinate and oversee all aspects of the project, including the application process, contracting process, reporting requirements, payments, job verification, and loan repayment if required.
- The local government is required to analyze the participating company's financial and organizational strength regarding its ability to successfully meet the terms of the job creation and maintenance requirements, and the ability to meet the potential for repayment of loan funds.
- In the event the company defaults on the job commitment, the local government is required to repay the loan to Commerce irrespective of whether the funds are collected from the property/business owner.
- When the improvements are owned by the local government, state regulations regarding procurement, including N.C.G.S.14-234 are required.
- Local governments are subject to state audit and reporting requirements.

MATCH REQUIREMENTS

- A cash match equivalent to at least 5% of the grant amount is required for all projects.
- The cash match shall come from local resources and may not be derived from other State or federal grant funds.
- Costs that are ineligible for grant funding may not be considered for the match. The only exception is paid grant administration when paid to an organization separate from the applicant organization.
- In-kind match is not allowable.
- In addition to the 5% match described above, the building reuse program requires a dollar for dollar match up to the total grant amount.

REPAYMENT REQUIREMENTS

- If job creation goals are not met, a pro-rata share of funds for each job not created must be repaid to the Department of Commerce by the local government.
- For Building Reuse projects, the local government will secure the funds through a Legally Binding Commitment executed between the local government and the property owner.
- For Infrastructure projects, the local government will secure the funds through a Legally Binding Commitment executed between the local government and the company owner.
- Repayment forgiveness is offered upon the successful verification of the required job creation by the Department of Commerce.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Submit a complete application package including the application form and the documents listed within the checklist below. Please submit one complete pdf (pages 6-10 of this document and all materials required for Tabs 1-5) to reireports@commerce.nc.gov.

Tab 1

- Application Form.** The form should be signed by local government chief elected official.
- Local Government Resolution.** Submit a signed resolution adopted by the governing board in support of application submission to the Department of Commerce. The resolution must state the purpose of the project, indicate the local government's support for the project, and commitment to provide a cash match of at least 5% of the grant request amount toward the project.

Tab 2

- Job Commitment Letters.** Submit a signed letter of job commitment from each company that will participate in the project. The letter should include **(1)** the number of existing full-time and part-time employees (listed separately) at all company locations in North Carolina, and **(2)** the number of new, full-time jobs to be created by the company and maintained concurrently for six-consecutive months within two years of the grant award date. The letter must be printed on the company's letterhead and signed by the company's Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer or President.
- Employer's Quarterly Tax and Wage Report—NCUI 101 Form(s).** Submit a copy of the of the *Employer's Quarterly Tax and Wage Report* (NCUI 101 form) for each company that will commit jobs to the project. The form must have been filed with the North Carolina Department of Commerce Division of Employment Security for the quarter ending closest to the application deadline. The entire Social Security Number for each person should be redacted (blacked out). The name and wages must remain readable. Any discrepancy in the number of employees listed on the NCUI 101 form(s) for the last month of the quarter and the number reported in the Job Commitment letter must be thoroughly explained in the narrative section of this application.
NOTE: If any company has more than one location in North Carolina, a NCUI-101 multi-site report or forms for each company location must be provided.
- Business Financial Documents.** Submit a copy of the most recent three years of certified or CPA prepared financial statements that include Balance Sheet, Income Statement and Statement of Cash Flows for each non-start-up company participating in the project.

Tab 3 – Building Reuse Projects Only

- Line Item Budget.** Submit a line item budget that lists the proposed renovation/construction expenses and the cost for each expense (example expenses include, but are not limited to: HVAC, electrical, plumbing, roofing, flooring, painting, etc.).
- Cost Estimates.** Submit cost estimates for each expense identified in the line item budget. The estimates must be prepared by a contractor, sub-contractor or architect and provided on that company's letterhead. A company owned or operated by any project partner may not provide estimates or be used as a contractor for the renovation project unless the company holds a valid NC General Contractors license. A copy of the company's valid NC General Contractor's license must be included in this section of the application materials.
- Site Control Documents.** Submit a copy of the property deed. Also, if the job creating company does not own the building, submit a copy of an executed lease agreement. If the property ownership will change, provide a detailed explanation of the real estate transaction that will occur with the legal names of the seller and buyer and date that the sale will close. Once the transaction is complete, a copy of the new deed must be submitted. The project will not be placed under contract until all correct, complete site control documents are received.

Tab 3 – Infrastructure Projects Only

- Preliminary Engineering Report (PER).** The PER should detail the proposed improvements and the current infrastructure that supports the proposed improvements. The PER should be sealed and dated and include an opinion of cost that is not more than six months old at the time of the application. The PER should include a map that shows the location of the business(es) as well as the location of the current infrastructure serving the project area and the proposed infrastructure improvements that will be supported through the project assistance.
- Line Item Budget.** Submit a line item budget that lists the expenses associated with the proposed infrastructure improvements and the cost for each expense.
- Proof of Funding Availability.** Submit a signed letter of funding availability from each source of funds committed for the project. The total of all funding commitment letters must meet or exceed the total project cost. If loan or other grant funds are pledged, a loan/grant commitment letter from each source of funds must be included.

Tab 4

- Photographs.** Submit photographs representative of the proposed project.

Tab 5 – Start-Up Businesses Only

- Business Plan.** A complete and detailed Business Plan that includes three years of financial projections (including balance sheets, cash flow statements and income statements) along with a Source and Use of Funds statement, with detailed assumptions upon which the financial projections were built. The Business Plan must also include a marketing plan that details what the company plans to sell and how they will market the product or service. The Business Plan should also provide a thorough description of the management team and the members' background that support the success of the venture. A description of the company's competitors should be provided, with an explanation of how the company will garner its expected share of the market.
- Capital Plan.** Details and evidence regarding the capital that has been or will be raised. This must include where the capital is currently on deposit and the total amount that is required to launch the business and sustain it in the early years. A letter from the depository holding the funds in escrow can serve as proof of the available capital.
 - Evidence of initial capitalization (loans, private investor commitments), as well as the ability to meet working capital needs must be provided.
 - A commitment letter from a bank for an operating line of credit needed to fund the "cash cycle" of the business and provide for unforeseen needs. In addition, the source of the funding for any machinery and equipment required for the project.
- Articles of Incorporation.** For each start-up company submit a copy of the company's "Articles of Incorporation" filed with the NC Department of the Secretary of State.
- Contracts with potential customers or letters of intent to buy from the company when it begins operations.**
- Copies of the bylaws, shareholder agreement or operating agreement of the business.**
- Copies of any certifications by regulatory bodies necessary to operate the business.**
- An understanding with the principal owners that they may be required to sign a personal guarantee of the performance of the grant and provide complete personal financial statements for each guarantor.**

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants should submit pages 6-10 of this application package including any revisions discussed in the pre-application conference call, along with the documents requested in Tabs 1-5 on pages 4-5 of this application package. Full applications should be emailed by 5:00 p.m. on the selected full-application deadline. The full list of application deadlines can be found on the Commerce website at www.commerce.nc.gov/ruralgrants.

E-Mail Application Materials:

reireports@commerce.nc.gov

Rural Engagement & Investment Programs
Rural Economic Development Division
North Carolina Department of Commerce



Application # _____
(For internal use only)

Vacant Building Existing Business Building Rural Health Care Rural Infrastructure

Applicant Information

Local Government

Name: _____ **County:** _____ **Tier #:** _____

Mailing Address: _____ **City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Primary Telephone: _____ **Federal Tax ID #:** _____

Website: _____

Chief Elected Official Name: _____ **Title:** _____

Telephone: _____ **Email:** _____

Manager/Administrator Name: _____ **Title:** _____

Telephone: _____ **Email:** _____

Local Government Project Manager (If different than above):

Name: _____ **Title:** _____

Telephone(s): _____ **Email:** _____

Grant Administrator Company Name (if applicable): _____

Mailing Address: _____ **City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Name: _____ **Title:** _____

Telephone(s): _____ **Federal Tax ID #:** _____

Website: _____ **Email:** _____

Project Information

Project Title: _____ **Grant Amount Requested (\$):** _____

Number of Businesses to be Assisted: _____ **Number of Jobs to be Created:** _____

Project Description (provide a summary of the project below):

Has any project participant ever benefitted from a grant with the Department of Commerce?

Yes

No

If Yes, please explain ↴

**Rural Building Reuse and Infrastructure
Application Form**

Property Owner Information

Property Owner Legal Name: _____

Property Owner Representative Name (First and Last): _____
(Authorized to sign loan documents for Building Reuse)

Property Owner Rep.
Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Property Owner Rep.
Phone: _____ Email: _____

Property Information

Property Address
for Project: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Year Building Was Constructed: _____ Number of Months Building Vacant: _____ Square Footage of Building: _____

Is the property listed on the National Register of Historic Places? Yes No

If you are unsure whether the property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, you can check the address by accessing the following website: <http://gis.ncdcr.gov/hpoweb/>. If the property is listed, the provisions of NCGS 121-12(a) will be required.

Company Information

BUSINESS Name: _____ Federal ID Tax #: _____

Business Representative Name: _____ NAICS Code: _____

Business Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Business Representative Phone: _____ Business Representative Email: _____

Check ONE box below for the Industry Type of the Business:

- Data & Call Services Healthcare Manufacturing Processing Warehouse/Distribution
 Professional Service Restaurant Retail Non-Profit

Is the proposed Business a startup? Yes No If no, how many years in business in NC? _____

Number of existing part-time employees in NC: _____ Will the business provide health benefits? Yes No

Number of existing full-time employees in NC: _____ What % of health benefits are employer paid? _____ %

Number of new full-time jobs committed: _____ Average annual wage of the new jobs committed? _____

If more than one company will participate in the project, please copy this page and complete for each additional company.

Local Government Certifications

The attached statements and exhibits are hereby made part of this application, and the undersigned representative of the applicant certifies that the information in this application and the attached statements and exhibits are true, correct, and complete to the best of the signatory's knowledge and belief. The signatory further certifies:

- 1 as Authorized Representative, the signatory has been authorized to file this application by formal action of the governing body;
- 2 that the governing body or agrees that if a grant is awarded, the applicant will provide proper and timely submittal of all documentation requested by the Grantor Agency;
- 3 that the applicant has substantially complied with or will comply with all federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations, and ordinances as applicable to this project;
- 4 that the applicant has analyzed the participating companies' financial and organizational strength regarding the ability to successfully meet the terms of the job creation and maintenance requirements, carry out the renovation project, as well as, the ability to meet the potential for repayment of loan funds; and
- 5 that the project is in accordance with the applicant's economic development plan and that the applicant has investigated any impact that the project may have on existing businesses within the applicant's jurisdiction.

Signature of Local Government Chief Elected Official

Typed Name

Typed Title

Date

Signature of Property Owner Representative

Typed Name

Typed Title

Date

Signature of Company CEO/CFO/COO/President

Typed Name

Typed Title

Date