



General Funding Criteria

APPLICATION GUIDELINES: All applications are now accepted only through an online application system. Applications are due by 11:59 pm on the date listed as the due date for each grant cycle period. The online system closes at that time and no exceptions are made in order to be fair to all applicants.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPLICANTS: Applicants must be a non-profit organization with a valid 501(c)(3) status under the U.S. IRS Code, other entity exempt from federal income taxes under section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code, a qualified educational institution, or governmental entity. Applicants' 501(c)(3) status will be verified through Guidestar (<https://www.guidestar.org/Home.aspx>). The status of educational and governmental entities will be confirmed as part of the application process.

These guidelines provide general direction for what RDA grants to, but do not limit other ideas that improve the quality of life for people in our region.

FUNDED ACTIVITIES

Proposals Types

- **Economic Development:** proposals that strengthen our region's business climate, build capacity for business start-ups/expansion, support an environment for innovation and entrepreneurship, support workforce development, human capital, and leadership initiatives, attend to generational transfer of businesses/assets, and develops tourism, our riverfront, and neighborhoods
- **Arts, Culture, and Heritage:** proposals that enrich our region's artistic, creative, and cultural amenities, advance inclusiveness of diverse ideas and populations, create a sense of place that attracts people to our region, presents a welcoming environment, and highlights our regional history
- **Education:** proposals that expand access to educational opportunities, increase educational attainment, foster parent engagement, and create high quality educational capabilities
- **Human Services:** proposals that address human need among vulnerable populations, engage people in solving community problems, and strengthen organizations in our region's safety net

Support Types

- **Events** draw people to region, create interesting things to do, celebrate regional history, develop our human potential, draw attention to important issues, and raise funds for charitable causes
- **Venues** to engage people, create tradition, innovation, and excitement for our region
- **Projects** invest in opportunities of inclusion and dignity for diverse and marginalized populations
- **Construction/renovations** that develop/ improve/maintain spaces for people to create, celebrate, serve, build community
- **Capital campaign** funding
- **Technology** to connect people, entertain, improve efficiencies, and build skills
- Develop **human capital** through leadership, education, skill-building, creative pursuits
- Create **strategic direction** and/or organizational efficiencies for NP orgs



Tips for Successful Grant Applications

- It's a good idea to review the entire process and all application questions before you begin. This helps you plan an application that tells your whole story and covers key scoring criteria.
- The online application system limits the length of your answers. Concise answers help volunteers (who read multiple applications) better understand each proposal.
- Be clear about the difference your proposal will make. Applications that describe a clear impact will score better. Also, focus more on describing the solution than the problem.
- Please don't include multiple projects in one application. This makes it difficult to prioritize all proposals.
- Be clear and objective about the number of individuals who will be impacted by the proposal.
- The amount you ask for in a proposal is a big factor in how likely it is to be funded. Keep in mind that the RDA typically receives requests for at least double the amount we have to award. A main focus of the Board is to benefit as many people as possible with available dollars.
- Outputs and outcomes can be challenging to create, collect, and report. However, clear metrics help readers understand what will be different when your proposal is implemented.
- Applicants must provide recent Balance Sheet and Income Statement. Up-to-date financial documents are one indicator of a strong organization. Outdated financial information may disqualify your proposal.

RDA Application Checklist

- Completed online application questions
- Upload listing of Board of Directors (include city and state of residence)
- Upload Balance Sheet and Income Statement – required for non-profit organizations.
- **WE NO LONGER REQUIRE THAT YOU SEND THE DETERMINATION LETTER AND CERTIFICATE OF EXISTENCE. THE ONLINE SYSTEM ALLOWS US TO VERIFY YOUR STATUS AS A NONPROFIT. IF THERE ARE QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR NONPROFIT STATUS, WE WILL CONTACT YOU.**

Common Reasons for Low Scoring on Grant Proposals

- Applications are unclear or missing required information
- Need is not adequately defined
- Proposal seems too ambitious – not realistic
- Budget is vague, unrealistic or lacks other funding sources
- Impact described doesn't justify amount requested, especially when compared to other proposals
- Past experience with applicant does not demonstrate expertise for successful implementation
- No or limited correlation to agency mission, vision and values – seems to show mission creep
- Impact on Scott County residents is unclear or insignificant
- Incomplete application

For questions on application process, please contact RDA at ceo@rdauthority.org or 563.323.5177.