

RURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (RDI)

Competitive Grant Round — Applicant Form (26)

APPLICANT & PROJECT INFORMATION

Applicant	Date
RDI Funds Requested	Census Tract(s)
Matching Funds	Other Funds
Total Project Cost	Contact Name
County / Municipality	Contact Title
Address	Email
Telephone	

PROJECT MANAGEMENT CONTACT

Contact Name	Contact Title
Address	Email
Telephone	

REQUIRED GRANT PROJECT INFORMATION

I. Project Description

Provide a detailed description of the proposed project. Attach any extra documents to the application.
For infrastructure, site improvement, or building construction projects, include: a highway map showing the project location and nearby highways, interstates and municipalities; an aerial map of the project area illustrating the planned improvement; and the location of existing infrastructure, as appropriate.

Applicant response / narrative:

II. Need for Project

Identify the problem(s)/need(s) for this project and the expected benefit(s). Explain how the project will resolve the identified needs and quantify benefits where possible. Explain why Rural Development funds are needed for the project.

Applicant response / narrative:

III. Project Cost and Schedule

Provide cost estimates and the project schedule. Attach any available cost estimates and project schedules. For infrastructure, site, or building projects, include an engineer's estimate of project cost and schedule. Timeline

Applicant response / narrative:

IV. FUNDING SOURCES

Include sources of funding and partners for all elements of the project. Note if supporting documentation is attached.

Funding Partner	Contribution Amount	Percent of Project	Attachment / Note
Amount of Grant Funds Requested			
Project Total			

V. CAPACITY

How will Community or Municipality ensure projects meets timelines and requirements set forth in application.

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VI. PROOF OF MATCH

Attach proof of required match in the form of commitment letters, statements, or other supporting documentation. List attachments below:

ATTACHMENTS

Attach cost estimates, preliminary engineering reports, maps, and other relevant attachments, as applicable. List documents below.

Attachment

APPLICANT ASSURANCES

The information provided in this application is correct to the best of the applicant's knowledge. The applicant understands that there will be no reimbursement of costs incurred before grant award unless prior written approval is given by the South Carolina Department of Commerce.

The applicant understands that if a grant award agreement is executed between the applicant and the South Carolina Department of Commerce, the County/Municipality will be required to ensure that quarterly reporting and appropriate procedures for procurement, contracting and fiscal accountability will be followed in the administration of the grant and the expenditure of monies.

CERTIFICATION / SUBMISSION

This application was submitted by:	
Name & Title of Chief Administrative Official of Local Government	
Signature	
Date	

South Carolina Department of Commerce Rural Development Initiative

Program Objectives and Overview

The Rural Development Initiative supports implementation-ready projects designed to strengthen South Carolina's rural communities. The initiative promotes strategic investments that enhance economic competitiveness, improve infrastructure, expand housing opportunities, revitalize downtowns and public spaces, and improve quality of life, while positioning communities for long-term prosperity.

Eligibility Requirements:

Any county and/or municipal government in Tiers III and IV. County and/or municipal governments with projects located in an eligible Opportunity Zone Census Tract in Tiers I and II counties. Any county and/or municipal government in a county without an eligible Opportunity Zone Census Tract if it has a population less than 20,000 residents.

Project Readiness: Applicants should demonstrate that all major pre-construction or implementation activities can reasonably be completed within ninety (90) days of award and Grant Funds must be expended within 24 months from the date of the grant award. Project activities include but are not limited to: Project design, Environmental review, Acquisitions or building improvements, Permitting.

Grant Award and Match Amount: Max award amount up to \$500,000. A 10% match is required for all grants. This match can come from federal, local government, other state funds, nonprofit organizations, or private support.

Evaluation: Applications will be evaluated using our program specific Evaluation Framework, which measures community need, investment readiness, project readiness, community impact, economic impact, financial commitment, and long-term sustainability. Funding recommendations will be based upon the highest overall evaluation scores.

Eligible Project Categories include but are not limited to

Economic Development, Site & Product Development, Infrastructure, Downtown Revitalization, Parks & Recreation, Transportation, Workforce Development, Strategic Planning Implementation

Applicants must submit a complete package including:

- Completed Application
- Funding Commitment Letters: Official letters on letterheads from all funding partners specifying committed amounts and availability timelines.
- Engineer's Cost & Schedule Estimates: Recent (within six months) detailed cost and timeline estimate for requested improvements. For acquisition projects, provide purchase documentation such as a signed Letter of Intent (LOI).
- Any other documented attachments.

SUBMISSION & AWARDS An informational webinar will be held October 1, 2026 and invitations will be sent to those who have submitted applications or contacted the Rural Development Team with application questions. Applications must be submitted electronically. We will start receiving applications September 1, 2026, and the window will close on October 30, 2026. Award notifications will be made by January 8, 2027.

Submit application as PDF files—appropriately named as follows: "Applicant Name – Project Name" Send all submission files to RuralDevelopment@sccommerce.com

GRANT REQUIREMENTS Awarded projects must comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, procurement requirements and program conditions. Where applicable, contracts for public works or site -development activities funded through the program must comply with South Carolina requirements governing iron and steel products permanently incorporated into state-funded projects, including requirements that qualifying products be produced in the United States, subject to any statutory exceptions or exemptions.

