



Florida Rural Infrastructure Fund (RIF) Application Overview Webinar for Fiscal Year 2020-2021

October 8, 2020



AGENDA

- Division of Community Development Overview
- RIF Fiscal Year (FY) 20-21 Program Overview
- RIF FY 20-21 Statutory Changes Summary
- RIF FY 20-21 Appropriation and Funding Categories
- RIF FY 20-21 Application Overview
 - Application Cycles Information for FY 20-21
 - NEW Online Application Submission Process
- Questions

DIVISION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Bureau of Community Planning and Growth

- Community Planning and Technical Assistance (CPTA) Grant Program

Bureau of Economic Self-Sufficiency

- Community Services Block Grant Program
- Low-Income Housing & Energy Assistance Program
- Weatherization Assistance Program

Bureau of Small Cities and Rural Communities

- Small Cities CDBG Program
- Rural Infrastructure Fund Program

Office of Small and Minority Business Capital

- Rebuild Florida Business Loan Fund
- Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan
- Rural Community Development Revolving Loan Program
- Small Business Loan Program
- Black Business Loan Fund
- Prospera; and more.

Office of Community Partnerships

- Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI)
- Competitive Florida Program
- Regional Rural Development Grant Program
- Office of Broadband

RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND OVERVIEW

- State-funded reimbursement grant program administered by DEO's Bureau of Small Cities and Rural Communities.
- Provides funding assistance for the planning, preparing and financing of infrastructure projects in rural communities, which will encourage job creation, capital investment and the strengthening and diversification of rural economies.
- Intended to facilitate access to rural communities of other state and federal infrastructure funding programs:
 - Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
 - U. S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development (USDA-RD)
 - U.S Economic Development Administration (EDA)
- Governed by Section 288.0655, Florida Statutes.

FY 20-21 STATUTORY CHANGES SUMMARY

The 2020 Florida Legislature passed legislation amending certain sections of the RIF statute (Section 288.0655, F.S.), summarized as follows:

- Grants may be awarded for up to 50% of the total infrastructure project cost (previously 30%).
- Removes language allowing up to 40% grant award for projects specific to funding for a catalyst site.
- Eligible projects and uses of funds may include improving access to and the availability of broadband internet service.
- Removes projects located in an enterprise zone as a factor for evaluation of funding applications.

STATUTORY CHANGES SUMMARY (CONT.)

- Eligible uses of funds shall include improvements to broadband internet service and access in unserved or underserved rural communities.
 - Improvements to broadband internet service and access must be conducted through partnership(s) with one or more dealers, as defined in section 202.11(2), Florida Statutes, registered with the Department of Revenue as a provider of communications services in Florida.
 - Partnership(s) must be established through a competitive selection process that is publicly noticed.
- By September 2021, DEO shall reevaluate existing RIF guidelines and criteria governing submission of applications for funding, review/evaluation of applications and approval of funding.

TOTAL PROJECT PARTICIPATION GRANTS

- Awards to facilitate and maximize use of state, federal, local and private resources.
- Awards up to 50 percent of the total infrastructure project costs related to specific job-creation or job-retention opportunities.
- Requires a Participating Party (job creator)
 - Application must include a Participating Party letter documenting the number of new/retained jobs and amount of capital investment provided.
- Application should clearly demonstrate the need of the infrastructure project in attracting job creation and capital investment.
- Other project funding sources must be secured prior to executing the RIF grant agreement.

TOTAL PROJECT PARTICIPATION (CONT.)

- Eligible uses of funds include:
 - Improvements to public infrastructure for industrial or commercial sites.
 - Upgrades to or development of public tourism infrastructure.
 - Improvements to access and availability of broadband internet service; requirements include:
 - Internet service and access must be conducted through partnership(s) with one or more dealers registered with Department of Revenue as a provider of communications services in Florida; and
 - Partnership(s) must be established through a competitive selection process that is publicly noticed.
 - Improvements to inadequate infrastructure that has resulted in regulatory action.
 - Exempt from Participating Party requirement.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION GRANTS

- Funds may be used for infrastructure feasibility studies, design and engineering activities or other infrastructure planning and preparation activities.
- Awards to facilitate a timely response and induce the location or expansion of specific job creating opportunities.
- Application criteria includes the extent to which administrative and consultant expenses are minimized.
- Maximum amounts of grants:
 - \$50,000 for an employment project with a business committed to create at least 100 jobs;
 - \$150,000 for an employment project with a business committed to create at least 300 jobs; and
 - \$300,000 for a project in a Rural Area of Opportunity.

PRECLEARANCE REVIEW GRANTS

- Enables rural communities to access the resources available under Expedited Permitting – Preclearance Review Process (Section 403.973(18) Florida Statutes).
- Funds may be used for surveys, feasibility studies and other activities related to the identification and preclearance review of land that is suitable for preclearance review.
- Grant application criteria includes the extent to which administrative and consultant expenses are minimized.
- Maximum amounts and match requirements:

Projects Located	Maximum Amt	Required Match
Outside a Rural Area of Opportunity	\$75,000	50% local funds
Within a Rural Area of Opportunity	\$300,000	33% local funds
Within a catalyst site (Section 288.056, Florida Statutes)	Same as above	Waived

PROGRAM APPLICATION REVIEW FACTORS

- RIF grant applications should clearly demonstrate the economic benefit of the project and its long-term viability.
- Evaluation of applications will include, but may not be limited to:
 - Project's potential for enhanced job creation or capital investment;
 - Whether the project is located in a community development corporation (CDC) service area;
 - The unemployment rate of the county in which the project is located; and
 - The poverty rate of the community.
- Grant administrative and consultant expenses should be minimized to the extent possible.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

RIF base funding:

- Units of local government within a Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO)
 - Northwest RAO
 - South Central RAO
 - North Central RAO
- Rural county or community as defined by the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) (Section 288.0656, Florida Statutes)

Florida Panhandle Specific Appropriation:

- Local governments in Calhoun, Gadsden, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty and Washington counties and all municipalities within their boundaries.

RIF FY 2020-2021 APPLICATION CYCLES

RIF base funding:

- Opened September 30, 2020.
- Open-ended through June 30, 2021.
- Accepted and reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis.

Florida Panhandle Specific Appropriation:

- Opened September 30, 2020
- Closes November 30, 2020, at 5 p.m. Eastern Time (ET);

New online grant application completion and submission:

- Online grant application link and instructions available at www.floridajobs.org/RIF.

ONLINE APPLICATION DEMONSTRATION

QUESTIONS





Thank You.

Visit the RIF program webpage for additional details and resources:

www.floridajobs.org/RIF



DEO RIF Program

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