

# United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development

## Rural Innovation Stronger Economy Grant Program

**The Rural Innovation Stronger Economy (RISE) grant application template** – on the following pages – provides a cover page, table of contents and a framework of divider pages to organize the grant application for submission to USDA-Rural Development. Each divider page will list the documents to be filed directly behind it. Please tab the divider pages as indicated.

The original application must be received in Grants.gov by 11:59pm Eastern time **on August 2, 2021** to complete for Fiscal Year 2021 Funding. For RISE program information, please visit the following website:

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-innovation-stronger-economy-rise-grants>

All applicants must have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number, which can be obtained at no cost via a toll free request line at 1-866-705-5711 or at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> . Your DUNS number should be identified in the “Organizational DUNS” field on Standard Form (SF) 424, “Application for Federal Assistance.”

All applicants must also register the DUNS number through the System for Award Management (SAM) process and obtain a Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) code. Go to [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov) to register your DUNS number. You must provide your SAM Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) Code and expiration date under the applicant eligibility discussion in your proposal narrative. If you do not include the CAGE code and expiration date and the DUNS number in your application, it will not be considered for funding.

This template does not replace the 4284-L Regulation.

# USDA-Rural Development

## Rural Innovation Stronger Economy Grant Program Grant Application Template

### 1. Title of Project:

Submitted by

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicants may only submit one RISE application per Fiscal year (FY).  
The maximum aggregate amount awarded to applicant cannot exceed \$2,000,000  
in a Fiscal Year

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Grant Request

Grant Writer Name  
Phone #

E-mail

Date Submitted to Grants.gov \_\_\_\_\_

# Rural Innovation Stronger Economy Grant Application

## 2. Table of Contents

Applicant Name \_\_\_\_\_

Application and Submission Information - Applicants must submit their application to Grants.gov that will be transmitted to the Rural Development National Office. Applicants must submit complete applications, consisting of the following elements, as found in regulation 4284-L and noted in the annual Federal Register Notice, in order to be considered for funding.

<b>Rural Innovation Stronger Economy Grant Application Components</b>		<b>Tab</b>
1	Title Page	
2	Table of Contents	
3	Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants (Nonprofits only) (Optional)	
4	Clarifications on Proposal Elements (This section is titled “Concept Paper”, see Federal Register notice for further guidance.) This section is limited to 10 pages in length using a minimum 11-point font and must include the following information in I. through IV. below.	A
	I. Rural jobs accelerator partnership information including the members and structure of the partnership, the date formalized, and the governance or leadership board. The information will identify the lead applicant and each partner’s ties to the region, their roles in the delivery of the RISE program and any history of previous collaboration between partners. The amount and source of anticipated matching funds will also be provided.	
	II. Describe the geographic region to be served including the total population, economic characteristics of the region such as unemployment rates and income levels. Industry sectors, their status, size and economic contribution to the region and all communities including metropolitan statistical areas and nonmetro low income communities within the region should be identified. The availability and planned enhancements of broadband service and other assets of the region should also be identified. If the region to be served has a population of more than 50,000 inhabitants, the applicant must document why they believe the area is “rural in character” including, but not limited to, the area’s population density, demographics, and topography and how the local economy is tied to a rural economic base.	

	<p>III. Identify the industry cluster(s) that will be prioritized by the rural jobs accelerator partnership with information on the firms and support industries in those clusters. Describe the status of the industry (as emerging, existing, or declining) any existing interconnection and networks within the industry cluster and describe participation and scale of small and disadvantaged businesses within the industry cluster. Describe the opportunities or potential of industry growth in the region and competitive advantages of the region and industry cluster should be highlighted along with opportunities within the industry for the creation of or upgrading to high wage jobs.</p>	
	<p>IV. An executive summary, project plan and scope of work must be provided with the Applicant's strategy, activities, budget, goals and objectives for the use of RISE funds. The applicant should also provide information on the sustainability of the partnership and jobs accelerator at the conclusion of the RISE grant period.</p>	
5	<p>Project specific forms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. SF 424 – Application – the Federal Catalog number is 10.868 – requires a DUNS number</li> <li>B. SF 424 A – Budget</li> <li>C. SF 424 B – Assurances</li> <li>D. SF 424 C – Construction (if applicable)</li> <li>E. Identify the ethnicity, race, and gender of lead applicant. (Optional)</li> <li>F. Certification that lead applicant is a legal entity in good standing</li> <li>G. Statement of any known relationships between lead applicant and Agency employee</li> </ul>	B
6	<p>Readiness Demonstration</p>	C
	<p>Description of readiness of all partners of the rural jobs accelerator partnership to contribute to the project including their ability to coordinate activities, finances, and outcomes of the project.</p>	
	<p>Evidence of a formal agreement among partners of the rural jobs accelerator partnership for delivery of the RISE program.</p>	
	<p>Evidence of demonstrated readiness in administering the RISE grant, if awarded, including demonstration of potential success in establishment of a jobs accelerator project, which targets an industry cluster and the initiatives of the RISE grant. The application should indicate when activities related to the expected outcomes will commence.</p>	
	<p>Description of how the project will be marketed in the region and how the rural jobs accelerator partnership will capture any program impacts and success stories.</p>	
	<p>Timeline describing the proposed tasks to be accomplished and the schedule for implementation of each task.</p>	
7	<p>Targeted Initiatives</p>	D
	<p>(Provide documentation on how the RISE project will impact the initiatives below, as applicable. Please provide a brief description on how and when the initiative will be delivered.)</p>	
	<p>Linking rural communities and entrepreneurs to markets, networks, industry clusters, and other regional opportunities to support high wage job creation, new business formation, business expansion, and economic growth</p>	
	<p>Integrating small businesses into a supply chain</p>	
	<p>Creating or expanding commercialization activities for new business formation</p>	
	<p>Identifying and building assets in rural communities that are crucial to supporting regional economies</p>	

	Facilitating the repatriation of high wage jobs to the United States	
	Supporting the deployment of innovative processes, technologies, and products	
	Enhancing the capacity of small businesses in regional industry clusters, including small and disadvantaged businesses	
	Increasing United States exports and business interaction with international buyers and suppliers	
	Developing the skills and expertise of local workforces, entrepreneurs, and institutional partners to meet the needs of employers and prepare workers for high wage jobs in the identified industry clusters, including the upskilling of incumbent workers	
	Ensuring rural communities have the capacity and ability to carry out projects related to housing, community facilities, infrastructure, or community and economic development to support regional industry cluster growth	
8	Potential to produce high wage jobs and benefit rural small and disadvantaged businesses.	E
	(Provide documentation on how the RISE project will impact the goals below)	
	Describe how the project will develop the skills and expertise of the local workforce, entrepreneurs and institutional partners to meet the needs of employers and prepare high wage jobs in the targeted industry cluster(s), which may also include the upskilling of incumbent worker.	
	Demonstrate how the project will benefit the skills and expertise of small and disadvantaged businesses, as applicable.	
	Demonstrate any participation of higher education, applied research institutions, workforce development entities and community-based organizations, that are willing to partner with the project to provide workers with skills relevant to the industry cluster needs of the region, with an emphasis on the use of on-the-job training, classroom occupational training or incumbent worker training, as applicable.	
	Demonstrate any participation of investment organizations, venture development organizations, venture capital firms, revolving loan funders, angel investment groups, community lenders, community development financial institutions, rural business investment companies, small business companies (as defined in Section 103 of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 662)), philanthropic organizations, and other institutions focused on expanding access to capital, are committed partners in the job accelerator partnership and willing to potentially invest in projects emerging from the jobs accelerator.	
9	Region	F
	Provide the latest Census Bureau information on the targeted region's median household income.	
	Provide the latest Census Bureau information on the targeted region's educational attainment, specifically the percentage of the population who hold a bachelor's degree.	
	Discuss how any direct career training will be provided to existing residents of the region. Existing residents being those that live in the region at the time of application.	
	Discuss any local support for the RISE project.	
	Discuss the entrepreneurial commitment to the RISE project.	
	Discuss any innovative processes and technologies to be utilized in the targeted industry cluster(s) of the RISE project.	
	Discuss the initial and continuing capital investment in the RISE project.	

	Discuss any demand for regional and global markets of the product and/or service provided by the targeted industry cluster.	
	. Discuss if the region consists of any Opportunity Zone(s)	
	Elaborate on the current broadband service within the region and any plans to leverage the current broadband service or enhance broadband service in the region through the RISE project.	
10	<b>Financial Information</b>	G
	Identification of matching funds and other sources of funds for the project. Provide written commitments for matching funds and other sources of funds at the time the application is submitted.	
	Current financial statements and a narrative description demonstrating financial feasibility and sustainability of the project, all of which demonstrate sufficient resources and expertise to undertake and complete the project and how the project will be sustained following completion.	

## Civil Rights Information

### 3. Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants (Nonprofits Only)

*The purpose of these questions is to gather race, ethnicity, and gender information about persons who apply and participate in this USDA program. The information provided will not be used when reviewing the application or when determining eligibility to participate in this program. The answers provided are voluntary and are not required to be considered a complete application. The information provided will be used to improve the operation of this program, to help USDA design additional opportunities for program participation, and to monitor enforcement of laws that require equal access to this program for eligible persons. For entities, check all that apply. The information will be kept private to the extent permitted by law.*

<p>What is the lead applicant's race? Identify the race of the lead applicant's leadership (check all that apply):</p>	<p>American Indian or Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Asian <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Black or African American <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>White <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>What is the lead applicant leadership's gender characteristics? :</p>	<p>Male <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Female <input type="checkbox"/></p>

What is the lead applicant leadership's ethnicity? :	Hispanic or Latino <input type="checkbox"/>
	Not Hispanic or Latino <input type="checkbox"/>

**Tab A**  
Divider Page

**4. Clarification on Proposal Elements** (This section is titled “Concept Paper”, see Federal Register Notice for further guidance.) This section in Tab A is limited to 10 pages in length using a minimum 11-point font and must include the following information in I. through IV. below.

***I. Rural jobs accelerator partnership information including the members and structure of the partnership, the date formalized, and the governance or leadership board. The information will identify the lead applicant and each partner’s ties to the region, their roles in the delivery of the RISE program and any history of previous collaboration between partners. The amount and source of anticipated matching funds will also be provided.***

***II. Describe the geographic region to be served including the total population, economic characteristics of the region such as unemployment rates and income levels. Industry sectors, their status, size and economic contribution to the region and all communities including metropolitan statistical areas and nonmetro low income communities within the region should be identified. The availability and planned enhancements of broadband service and other assets of the region should also be identified. If the region to be served has a population of more than 50,000 inhabitants, the applicant must document why they believe the area is “rural in character” including, but not limited to, the area’s population density, demographics, and topography and how the local economy is tied to a rural economic base.***

***III. Identify the industry cluster(s) that will be prioritized by the rural jobs accelerator partnership with information on the firms and support industries in those clusters. Describe the status of the industry (as emerging, existing, or declining) any existing interconnection and networks within the industry cluster and describe participation and scale of small and disadvantaged businesses within the industry cluster. Describe the opportunities or potential of industry growth in the region and competitive advantages of the region and industry cluster should be highlighted along with opportunities within the industry for the creation of or upgrading to high wage jobs.***



**IV. An executive summary, project plan and scope of work must be provided with the Applicant's strategy, activities, budget, goals and objectives for the use of RISE funds. The applicant should also provide information on the sustainability of the partnership and jobs accelerator at the conclusion of the RISE grant period.**

**Tab B**  
Divider Page

**5. Project Specific Forms**

Federal Tax ID #

DUNS #

To get a DUNS number, call 1-866-705-5711 or go to <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>

*Also Insert DUNS number on SF424 Form*

System for Award Management (SAM) (CAGE code)

All applicants must also register their DUNS # in the System for Award Management and obtain a CAGE code prior to submitting an application. Registration in SAM must remain active during all times during which an active Federal award or application is under consideration.

For information on what is required to register with SAM, go to: [https://www.sam.gov/sam/transcript/Quick\\_Guide\\_for\\_Grants\\_Registrations.pdf](https://www.sam.gov/sam/transcript/Quick_Guide_for_Grants_Registrations.pdf)

To begin the SAM registration process, go to: <http://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>

CAGE Code

Expiration Date

**Project Specific Forms**

Forms can be found by typing in the form name (.ie. SF 424) in the "Form Number" column via this website: <https://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eForms/welcomeAction.do?Home>

*Insert the executed forms immediately after this divider page.*

SF 424 – Application for Federal Assistance

SF 424A – Budget Information	
SF 424B – Assurances	
SF 424C – Construction (if applicable)	
Applicant eligibility and project eligibility certification/determination (Certifications on following pages)	

# Rural Innovation Stronger Economy Grant Program

## Applicant Eligibility and Project Eligibility Certification/Determination Form

*Per 4284.1112 - Applicant Eligibility*

<b>(A) Type of applicant.</b> A rural jobs accelerator partnership must include one or more representatives of the following:		Applicant Certification: (Please Check as applicable )
(i) a State, Tribal, or local government		
(ii) a State, Tribal, or local government entity		
(iii) a land-grant college or university or other institution of higher education, as defined in the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)		
(iv) a rural non-profit cooperative		
(v) a private entity, which may include a business in an industry cluster, economic development or community development organization, financial institution including a community development financial institution, philanthropic organization or labor organization		
<b>AND a lead applicant from the following:</b>		
(i) district organization		
(ii) Indian Tribe, or a political subdivision of a Tribe, including a special purpose unit of a tribal government engaged in economic development activities or a consortium of Indian Tribes		
(iii) State or political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unity of a State or local government engaged in economic development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions		
(iv) institution of higher education (as defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001) or a consortium of institutions of higher education)		
(v) public or private nonprofit organization		
<b>(B) Legal entity in good standing.</b> Each applicant must certify that it is a legal entity in good standing (as applicable), and operating in accordance with the laws of the State(s) or Tribe where the Applicant has a place of business.		
Are you (the lead applicant) a legal entity in good standing in accordance with the laws of the State(s) or Tribe where you have a place of business?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
List the State or Tribe where you have a place of business?		
<b>(C) Known relationship with Agency Employee.</b> The Applicant must identify whether or not there is a known relationship or association with a Rural Development Employee. If there is a known relationship, identify each employee with whom you have a relationship.		
Does the applicant has a known relationship with a Rural Development employee?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If Yes, identify the name of each employee:		
<b>(D) Ineligible applicants.</b> Consistent with Department regulations, an applicant is ineligible if it is debarred or suspended or is otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in Federal assistance programs.		
Have you (the lead applicant) ever been debarred or determined ineligible for participation in Federal assistance programs?	Applicant certification: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

Lead applicants will also be considered ineligible for a grant if they have an outstanding Federal judgment (other than one obtained in the U.S. Tax Court), are delinquent on the payment of Federal income taxes, or are delinquent on Federal debt.	
Do you (the lead applicant) have any outstanding federal judgment, or are you delinquent on federal income tax or delinquent on any federal debt?	Lead applicant certification: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Per 4284.1110 (a) The Agency will review prior RISE awards to lead applicants to determine satisfactory progress. To be eligible for additional funding, lead applicants that have unexpended funding from previous RISE grants must expend 50 percent or more of previous RISE awards at the time the Agency makes its eligibility determination or the application will be deemed ineligible for that funding cycle.	

*Per 4284.1113 - Project eligibility.*

To be eligible for a RISE grant, the grant funds for a project must be used by the grant recipient to meet the requirements specified below.

<i>Project eligibility questions for the applicant</i>	Yes	No
1. The construction or purchase of a building to serve as an innovation center located in a rural low-income community, which establishes and/or supports a jobs accelerator and any equipment needs of the innovation center to support the jobs accelerator.		
2. The support of programs to be carried out at or in direct partnership with the jobs accelerator or in support of jobs accelerator initiatives including one ore more of the following:		
Linking rural communities and entrepreneurs to markets, networks, industry clusters, and other regional opportunities to support high-wage job creation, new business formation, business expansion, and economic growth of rural communities		
Integrating rural small businesses into a supply chain		
Creating or expanding commercialization activities for new business formation in rural areas		
Identifying and building assets in rural communities that are crucial to supporting regional economies		
Facilitating the repatriations of high-wage jobs to the United States		
Supporting the deployment of innovative processes, technologies, and products		
Enhancing the capacity of rural small businesses in regional industry clusters, including small and disadvantaged businesses		
Increasing United States exports and business interaction with international buyers and suppliers		
Developing the skills and expertise of local workforces, entrepreneurs, and institutional partners in the region to meet the needs of employers and prepare workers for high-wage jobs in the identified industry clusters, including the upskilling of incumbent workers		
Ensuring rural communities have the capacity and ability to carry out projects relating to housing, community facilities, infrastructure, or community and economic development to support regional industry cluster growth		
Any activities that the Agency may determine to be appropriate, as specified in a Federal Register notice (Please note)		

3. Not more than 10 percent of the RISE grant award will be used for indirect costs of the applicant associated with administering the RISE grant.		
4. The innovation center currently is or will be physically located in a rural area as defined in § 4284.1103 or in a non-rural area; as long as assistance being provided is to residents located in a rural area. Additionally, the innovation center must be located in a rural low income community if grant funds are used for the construction or purchase of an innovation center.		
5. Applicant understands and is cautioned against taking any actions or incurring any obligations prior to the Agency completing the environmental review that would either limit the range of alternatives to be considered or that would have an adverse effect on the environment, such as the initiation of construction. If the applicant takes any such actions or incurs any such obligations, it could result in project ineligibility. Projects involving the construction of an innovation center as an eligible purpose are subject to the environmental requirements of 7 CFR 1970.		

<u>Applicant and Project Eligibility answers provided by:</u>
Applicant Name :
Authorized Representative Name:
Authorized Representative Signature:
Title:
Date:

**Tab C**  
Divider Page

**6. Readiness Demonstration**

Description of readiness of all partners of the rural jobs accelerator partnership to contribute to the project including their ability to coordinate activities, finances, and outcomes of the project.	
Evidence of a formal agreement among partners of the rural jobs accelerator partnership for delivery of the RISE program.	
Evidence of demonstrated readiness in administering the RISE grant, if awarded, including demonstration of potential success in establishment of a jobs accelerator project, which targets an industry cluster and the initiatives of the RISE grant. The application should indicate when activities related to the expected outcomes will commence.	
Description of how the project will be marketed in the region and how the rural jobs accelerator partnership will capture any program impacts and success stories.	
Timeline describing the proposed tasks to be accomplished and the schedule for implementation of each task.	

**Tab D**  
Divider Page

**7. Targeted Initiatives**

**(Provide documentation on how the RISE project will impact the initiatives below, as applicable. Please provide a brief description on how and when the initiative will be delivered.)**

Linking rural communities and entrepreneurs to markets, networks, industry clusters, and other regional opportunities to support high wage job creation, new business formation, business expansion, and economic growth	
Integrating small businesses into a supply chain	
Creating or expanding commercialization activities for new business formation	
Identifying and building assets in rural communities that are crucial to supporting regional economies	
Facilitating the repatriation of high wage jobs to the United States	

Supporting the deployment of innovative processes, technologies, and products	
Enhancing the capacity of small businesses in regional industry clusters, including small and disadvantaged businesses	
Increasing United States exports and business interaction with international buyers and suppliers	
Developing the skills and expertise of local workforces, entrepreneurs, and institutional partners to meet the needs of employers and prepare workers for high wage jobs in the identified industry clusters, including the upskilling of incumbent workers	
Ensuring rural communities have the capacity and ability to carry out projects related to housing, community facilities, infrastructure, or community and economic development to support regional industry cluster growth	

**Tab E**  
Divider Page

**8. Potential to produce high wage jobs and benefit rural small and disadvantaged businesses.**

**(Provide documentation on how the RISE project will impact the goals below)**

Describe how the project will develop the skills and expertise of the local workforce, entrepreneurs and institutional partners to meet the needs of employers and prepare high wage jobs in the targeted industry cluster(s), which may also include the upskilling of incumbent worker.	
Demonstrate how the project will benefit the skills and expertise of small and disadvantaged businesses, as applicable.	
Demonstrate any participation of higher education, applied research institutions, workforce development entities and community-based organizations, that are willing to partner with the project to provide workers with skills relevant to the industry cluster needs of the region, with an emphasis on the use of on-the-job training, classroom occupational training or incumbent worker training, as applicable.	

Demonstrate any participation of investment organizations, venture development organizations, venture capital firms, revolving loan funders, angel investment groups, community lenders, community development financial institutions, rural business investment companies, small business companies (as defined in Section 103 of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 662)), philanthropic organizations, and other institutions focused on expanding access to capital, are committed partners in the job accelerator partnership and willing to potentially invest in projects emerging from the jobs accelerator.

**Tab F**  
Divider Page

**9. Region**

Provide the latest Census Bureau information on the targeted region’s median household income.

Provide the latest Census Bureau information on the targeted region’s educational attainment, specifically the percentage of the population who hold a bachelor’s degree.

Discuss how any direct career training will be provided to existing residents of the region. Existing residents being those that live in the region at the time of application.

Discuss any local support for the RISE project.

Discuss the entrepreneurial commitment to the RISE project.

Discuss any innovative processes and technologies to be utilized in the targeted industry cluster(s) of the RISE project.

Discuss the initial and continuing capital investment in the RISE project.

Discuss any demand for regional and global markets of the product and/or service provided by the targeted industry cluster.



Discuss if the region consists of any Opportunity Zone(s)	
Elaborate on the current broadband service within the region and any plans to leverage the current broadband service or enhance broadband service in the region through the RISE project.	

**Tab G**  
Divider Page



**10. Financial Information**



Identification of matching funds and other sources of funds for the project. Provide written commitments for matching funds and other sources of funds at the time the application is submitted.	
Current financial statements and a narrative description demonstrating financial feasibility and sustainability of the project, all of which demonstrate sufficient resources and expertise to undertake and complete the project and how the project will be sustained following completion.	