

BUSINESS BUILDER GRANTS

Spring 2024 Application Cycle
ND Partners Q&A Session

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April 10, 2024



DISCLAIMER

This event is hosted by the North Dakota partners of the North Central Regional Food Business Center (NC-RFBC) and facilitated by Economic Recovery Corps Fellow, Felicity Merritt.

The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL FOOD BUSINESS CENTER

- Our goal is to transform a region that primarily focuses on commodity and large-scale agriculture into an area that also supports smaller, more resilient farm and food practices, specifically focusing on the development of mid-tier value chains.
- North Dakota partners have developed a statewide local foods action plan to build the food value chain in North Dakota by supporting producers and providing them greater market access opportunities.



BUSINESS BUILDER GRANT OVERVIEW

- The purpose of the grant funds is to strengthen and support the food businesses in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota
 - To increase business access to local and regional markets
- \$600,000 in total (\$200,000 for ND)
- Award Amount: \$35,000 - \$50,000 (max)
- No Match

TIMELINE



Opened

April 2, 2024



Applications Due

April 30, 2024



Awardees Announced

June 30th, 2024



Project Implementation Timeline

Within 2 Years of Award

ELIGIBILITY

- Growers, producers, aggregators, distributors, and food access points (food co-ops, farmers markets, etc.) are eligible applicants.
- For-profit private sector and non-profit organizations that are small to mid-sized local food value chain businesses are encouraged to apply!



USES

- Grants may support staff time, business planning activities, software implementation, the purchase of equipment (food safety, processing and/or packaging equipment), value chain and supply chain coordination and innovation, product development, and marketing.
- Not: Production inputs, general equipment, land rent



PRIORITY AREAS

- A group of small to mid-sized local foods value chain businesses
- Seeking to expand markets to institutions that source locally grown/raised commodities
- Addressing a specific market bottleneck or meet [ACTION PLAN](#) goals as developed by TA providers.
- Applicants within or serving priority distressed zip codes.
 - ND: Belcourt, Cannon Ball, Carson, Dunseith, Fort Totten, Fort Yates, Glen Ullin, Halliday, Hoople, Lemmon, Maddock, Medina, Minto, Parshall, Rolette, Saint Michael, Selfridge, Stanton, Walhalla

USDA AMS GOALS

- Provide market information, intelligence, and assistance supporting the development of new markets.
- Provide quality claims and analyses to facilitate agricultural marketing.
- Provide effective oversight of markets and entities.
- Provide premier procurement and TA to identify and fulfill the needs of agricultural, food assistance and other programs.
- Facilitate fair trade in handling and marketing of agricultural commodities and products.
- Sustain and enrich a progressive and dynamic organization and workforce.

Application Process & Tools to Use

Provided by NC-RFBC

APPLICATION

CHECKLIST

- Broad overview list. Helpful to see how your project aligns with a goal of the award, and what your main steps will be in applying.

North Central Regional Food Business Center Business Builder Sub-Award Application Checklist

This checklist will help you gather the information you need to prepare to answer the questions in the application.

Technical Assistance:

The NCRFBC has a large network of partners and service partners available to provide technical assistance.

Assistance includes:

- Project development and consultation.
- Food business development services.
- Supply chain development and coordination.
- Grant writing support and grant administration guidance
- Network referrals to other service providers with appropriate expertise.

Click the map to find contact information for a Regional Food Business technical assistance provider in your area:

<https://www.northcentralrfbc.org/about>

Application Submission:

- Note the application deadline and ensure all materials are submitted within the specified period (Application deadline is April 30, 2024)
- Verify there are no conflicts of interest between your organization and the project
- Verify Unique Entity Identifier ([What is this?](#))
 - SAM.gov is an official website of the United States government. SAM.gov is FREE to use. There is no charge to get a Unique Entity ID, register your entity, and maintain your entity registration at SAM.gov.
 - Registration can take **up to 10 business days** to become active.
 - [Get a Unique Entity ID \(youtube.com\)](#)
- Ensure your organization qualifies as a for-profit private sector or non-profit organization falling within the small to mid-sized local food value chain businesses category. ([Definitions](#))
- Confirm your organization's gross sales fall within the defined range for small to mid-sized value chain businesses ([Definitions](#))
- Reach out to your [Technical Assistance Provider](#) if you need assistance.
- Understand payment options
- Understand and check off assurances
- Understand next steps (Awardees will be announced June 30th, 2024)
- Submit the completed application along with any required attachments by the specified deadline.

North Central Regional Food Business Center Scoring Rubric for BBSA

Our comprehensive Scoring Rubric, a foundational tool in the selection process of recipients. This rubric outlines the specific criteria and point allocations that reviewers will use to evaluate sub-award applications. It is designed to ensure an objective and consistent assessment of applications.

Informed by Question(s):	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point	SCORE
1a What do you want to do?	Project fully aligns with the Regional Action Plan &/or regional bottlenecks	Project mostly aligns with the Regional Action Plan&/or regional bottlenecks	Project slightly aligns with the Regional Action Plan &/or regional bottlenecks	Project does not align with the Regional Action Plan &/or regional bottlenecks	
1b What do you want to do: Project Objectives	Project objectives/goals are clearly defined, specific and measurable and demonstrate potential for positive impact.	Project objectives/goals are mostly defined, specific and measurable and demonstrate potential for positive impact.	Project objectives/goals are slightly defined, specific, and measurable.	Project objectives/goals are not clearly defined, specific and measurable and do not demonstrate potential for positive impact.	
2 Uniqueness & Value Why is it important?	Project is innovative, adds value to the current work being done, and builds on 3 or more WealthWorks regional assets.	Project is mostly innovative, adds value to the current work being done, and builds on 2 WealthWorks regional assets.	Project is slightly innovative, adds some value to the current work being done, and builds on 1 WealthWorks regional assets.	Project is already being done, adds little additional value to the current work being done, and does not build on WealthWorks regional assets.	
3 Organizational Capacity	Organizational capacity is clearly defined, timelines are acceptable and there are defined intentions beyond the life of the grant.	Organizational capacity is mostly defined, timelines are acceptable and there are intentions beyond the life of the grant.	Organizational capacity is slightly defined, timelines need tweaking and there are slight intentions beyond the life of the grant.	Organizational capacity is not defined, timelines are not acceptable and there are not recognizable intentions beyond the life of the grant.	
4 Outcomes & Impacts: Overview	Outcomes are clearly defined, and measurable. Evaluation methods align with the desired measurements.	Outcomes are mostly defined, and measurable. Evaluation methods mostly align with the desired measures	Outcomes are slightly defined, and measurable. Evaluation methods slightly align with the desired measures	Outcomes are not defined, and measurable. Evaluation methods do not align with the desired measures	
5 Outcomes &	Proposal addresses how the project will	Proposal mostly addresses how the	Proposal slightly addresses how the	Proposal does not benefit target	

SCORING RUBRIC

- See how projects will be scored. Helpful to see how your project aligns with the incentive of the award.

DEFINITIONS

- If you are confused by the jargon and need a definition, read through the document to get your handle on what everything means.

Business Builder Sub-Award Grant Definitions

Low-income area - a census tract as reported in the most recently completed decennial census published by the United States Bureau of the Census that has a poverty rate of at least 20 percent or in which the median family income does not exceed 80 percent of the greater of the statewide or metropolitan median family income.

Moderate-income area - a census tract as reported in the most recently completed decennial census published by the United States Bureau of the Census in which the median family income is between 81 percent and 95 percent of the median family income for that area.

Underserved community - a census tract that is federally designated as a food desert by the United States Department of Agriculture, or a census tract in a low-income or moderate-income area that includes a substantial subpopulation such as the elderly or the disabled that has low supermarket access, regardless of distance, due to lack of transportation.

Agricultural products - When used by the North Central Regional Food Business Center, the term "agricultural products" means agricultural, horticultural, viticultural, and dairy products, livestock and the products thereof, the products of poultry and bee raising, the edible products of forestry, and any and all products raised or produced on farms and processed or manufactured products thereof.

Institutions - defined as schools, restaurants, daycares, senior centers, etc.

Producers - those raising or growing agricultural products that are nationally legal.

Aggregators - those gathering and storing agricultural products.

Distributors - those transporting or intended to be transported in interstate and/or foreign commerce.

Food Access Points

For purposes of defining a "food access point" the following terms have the meanings given them:

(a) "**Farmers' market**" means an association of three or more persons who assemble at a defined location that is open to the public for the purpose of selling directly to the consumer the products of a farm or garden occupied and cultivated by the person selling the product.

(b) "**Food hub**" means a centrally located facility with a business management structure that facilitates the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, marketing, and sale of locally or regionally produced food products, and which may include a small-scale retail grocery operation.

(c) "**Grocery store**" means a for-profit, not-for-profit, or cooperative self-service retail establishment that sells primarily meat, fish, seafood, fruits, vegetables, dry groceries, and dairy products and may also sell household products, sundries, and other products. Grocery store includes a supermarket or a large-, mid-, or small-scale retail grocery establishment and may include a mobile food market or a delivery service operation.

(d) "**Mobile food market**" means a self-contained for-profit, not-for-profit, or cooperative retail grocery operation located in a movable new or renovated truck, bus, or other vehicle that is used to store, prepare, display, and sell primarily meat, fish, seafood, fruits, vegetables, dry groceries, and dairy products and may also be used to sell a nominal supply of cooking utensils and equipment and other household products and sundries.

(e) "**Small food retailer**" means a small-scale retail food outlet, other than a grocery store as defined in this section. Small food retailer includes, but is not limited to, a corner store, convenience store, farmers' market, mobile food market, and a retail food outlet operated by an emergency food program or food hub.

WORKING DOCUMENT

- A draft for your application.
- Your holy grail. Don't write the application without this.
- Use this to work out your answers, organize your thoughts, and refine the proposal prior to submitting everything.

Working Document to Gather Details for Business Builder Grant Application Submission
When Ready: [Click here for Link to Official Application](#)

REGIONAL FOOD BUSINESS CENTERS NORTH CENTRAL

The North Central Regional Food Business Centers (NC-RFBC) will support supply chain resiliency and pandemic response by building the capacity of small and mid-sized food producers, businesses, or networks of businesses. Business Builder Sub-Awards will provide financial assistance of up to \$50,000 (with a minimum of \$35,000.00) to support food businesses with projects focused on regional needs, and businesses that are working towards expansion. Please also refer to the Definitions.

Interested applicants may reach out to your local Technical Assistance provider to assist in writing the grant application, with partners found at: <https://www.northcentralrfbc.org/about>

The review committee is comprised of 5 individuals from each state (MN, ND, SD).

Applications are due at noon CST April 30, 2024

The application period is open once a year with applications to be received between March 1 and April 30 of each year of the program. Decisions will be made on applications by June 30 of each year.

Each NC-RFBC Business Builder Sub Award grant recipient may receive a maximum Business Builder Sub Award of \$50,000.00. – The recipient must implement the approved proposal within 2 years of the date of the Business Builder Sub Award, as stated on the grant Business Builder Sub Award letter. **ALL projects MUST be fully completed by January 1, 2028.**

Eligible applicants/recipients: For-profit private sector and non-profit organizations that are small to mid-sized local food value chain businesses are eligible applicants. A "small to mid-sized value chain business" is defined as Small (<\$350,000 gross sales) and Midsize (>\$350,000 but less than \$1 million gross sales). A "value-chain" business is defined as a for-profit private sector or non-profit organization that are Producers (e.g., commodities, fruits and vegetables or livestock), Aggregators, Distributors, or food access points (food co-ops, farmers markets etc.)

Eligible uses: Business Builder Sub Awards may be used to pay for *staff time, business planning activities, software implementation value chain and supply chain coordination and innovation, product development, marketing, supply chain analysis and strategy development to identify supply chain gaps and specialization opportunities* (collectively called "Support Services"). Business Builder Sub Awards may be used to *purchase equipment (such as food safety, processing and/or packaging equipment).*

Name of Organization or Business:
SAM.gov UEI:
Phone:
Email:

Physical Address:
Street:
City:
State:
Zip

Mailing Address (if different from above):
Street:
City:
State:
Zip:

Point of Contact:
Name:
Title:
Phone:
Email:

Select the option that best describes your business. (select only one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Farmer, Rancher, Agricultural Production (Producer)	<input type="checkbox"/> Producer Cooperative
<input type="checkbox"/> Food hub	<input type="checkbox"/> Aggregator (Other than food hub)
<input type="checkbox"/> Distributor	<input type="checkbox"/> Processor
<input type="checkbox"/> Community-based non-profit	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-producer Cooperative
<input type="checkbox"/> Farmers Market	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Health Center

Other _____

PROJECT TITLE
Provide a descriptive project title in 15 words or less in the space below.

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Form to be submitted online via Survey Monkey

* 1. Name of Organization or Business

* Filing Name

* Common Name

* 2. Business's Unique Entity Identifier number (More information on how to obtain a UEI can be found here: [Get a Unique Entity ID in SAM.gov](https://sam.gov/get-unique-entity-id))

* 3. Business Phone

Country

Code

Phone number

* 4. Business Email

Email address

* 5. Business Address

* Street address

BUDGET NARRATIVE

- Needs to be attached to the application.
- Only document that needs to be attached.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The budget must show the total cost for the project and provide a description and justification for each of the relevant category costs listed. The budget justification must provide enough detail to easily understand how costs were determined and how they relate to the Project Objectives and Expected Outcomes. Leave blank any expense category not funded by this project.

PERSONNEL

List the personnel whose time and effort can be specifically identified and easily and accurately traced to award activities.

+ #	Personnel Name/Title	Level of Effort (# of hours OR % FTE)	Funds Requested
-			\$0.00
Personnel Subtotal			\$0.00
PERSONNEL JUSTIFICATION			

For each individual listed in the above table, describe the activities to be completed by name/title including approximately when activities will occur. Add more personnel by copying and pasting the existing list or deleting personnel that aren't necessary.

TRAVEL

Explain the purpose for each Trip Request. Please note that travel costs are limited to those allowed by formal organizational policy; in the case of air travel, project participants must use the lowest reasonable commercial airfares. For recipient organizations that have no formal travel policy and for-profit recipients, allowable travel costs may not exceed those established by the Federal Travel Regulation, issued by GSA, including the maximum per diem and subsistence rates prescribed in those regulations. This information is available at <http://www.gsa.gov>.

+ #	Trip Destination	Type of Expense (e.g., airfare, car rental, hotel, etc.)	Unit of Measure (e.g., days, nights, miles)	# of Units	Cost per Unit	Funds Requested
-					\$0.00	\$0.00
Travel Subtotal						\$0.00

TRAVEL JUSTIFICATION

For each trip listed in the above table, describe the purpose of this trip and how it will achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. Be sure to include approximately when the trip will occur. Add more trips by copying and pasting the existing listing or delete trips that aren't necessary.

UEI

- SAM.gov is an official website of the United States government. SAM.gov is FREE to use.
- Registration can take up to 10 business days to become active.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

What does that mean?

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

Region 1
Tri-County Regional Development Center

Region 2
Souris Basin Planning Council

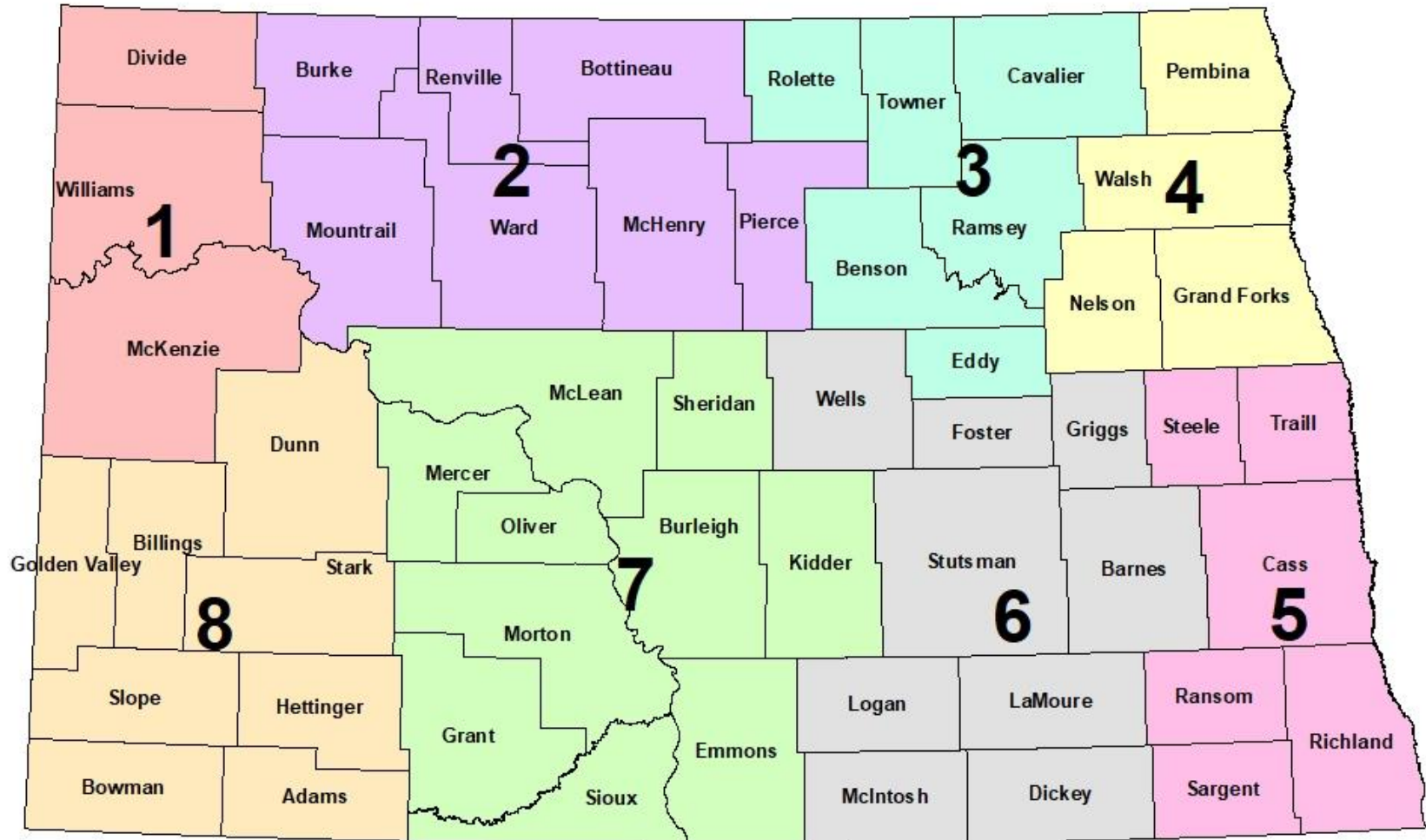
Region 3
North Central Planning Council

Region 4
Red River Regional Council

Region 5
Lake Agassiz Development Group

Region 6
South Central Dakota Regional Council

Region 7&8
Roosevelt Custer Regional Council



What can we do?



- Help you refine your idea.
- Help you organize your thoughts to fit in the application guidelines.
- Meet with you to navigate the application process.



- Develop your [entire] project idea/concept.
- Write/submit your grant application*

1-on-1 TA Meetings

https://bit.ly/BBSA_TAbooking

- Friday, April 19
- 9:00 am – 3:00 pm CT
- Book a 30-minute block



Find a Technical Assistance Provider

- Each region has an entity assigned, along with statewide TA
- Meet with us outside these times!
- We are here to help.



ASK YOURSELF



Why do you think your project is a good fit for this grant?

(How does it align with the grant objectives?)



How do you want to utilize these funds?

(specific activities or equipment)

KEEP IN MIND



This is the first of a 5-year program



Other years will have a longer lead time to develop an application



Award cap at \$100,000/organization

QUESTIONS

Questions we've gotten already

Who is scoring grants?

- The review committee is comprised of 5 individuals from each state (MN, ND, SD).
- Scored against applicants within your own state.

What about multi-state projects?

- The state that you are reviewed under is where the organization of the primary applicant is located.

THANK YOU

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Applications & Details | <https://www.northcentralrfbc.org/funding>

Recording & Slides | <https://www.farrms.org/nc-rfbc>