

Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District General Improvement Fund Policy & Procedures

Overview:

The Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District (NWAEDD) General Improvement Fund (GIF) Grant Program is funded by the state legislature biennially based on the availability of excess revenue. These funds are used to allow grant recipients to plan, develop, promote and/or implement economic and community development projects/activities designed to improve the economic, community and/or social well-being of the citizens of Arkansas. The following sections outline the guidelines of this program.

GIF Grant Applications:

- Applications may be accessed on the web at www.nwaedd.org, by contacting our office at 870-741-5404, or through referrals from elected officials. (See Appendix A for a sample GIF application)
- Only original applications will be accepted and may be delivered to our office via U.S. mail, a private parcel company, or in person.
- The application deadline is E.O.B. on the day that falls two weeks prior to the next scheduled NWAEDD Board meeting. Applications received after the deadline in the two weeks leading up to the next scheduled board meeting will not be eligible for consideration until the following board meeting.

Determining Eligibility of an Applicant:

- Once an application is received NWAEDD staff will perform an initial review to ensure the applicant is an eligible entity for GIF funding.
- Examples of eligible GIF grant applicants:
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - County & Municipal Governments
 - Public Educational Institutions
 - Fair Boards/Associations
 - Senior Centers
 - State Government Agencies
 - Volunteer Fire Departments
 - Non Profit Organizations
 - Others deemed eligible by meeting the required criteria

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- Ineligible GIF Grant Applicants
 - Private Businesses
 - Individuals
 - Private Education Institutions
 - Political Party Organizations
 - Religious Organizations, e.g., churches, mosques, synagogues.
- If an entity is determined an ineligible recipient, NWAEDD will notify the applicant that its application has been denied and the reason for its rejection.
- Once an applicant is determined to be an eligible entity (see examples of eligible entities on page 1), the application will be reviewed for qualification as outlined below.
- To qualify for submission to the NWAEDD Board of Directors for consideration, each applicant must meet the following criteria :
 - Paid in full NWAEDD locality dues
 - If the applicant is an entity other than a county or city, the applicant will be given credit for paid in full locality dues if the city the applicant resides in has paid its locality dues. If the applicant resides in an unincorporated area of the county, the applicant will be given credit if the county has paid its locality dues.
- Eligible applicants that meet the criteria stated above will then have its application presented to the board for consideration at the next scheduled board meeting.
- Entities whose applications are otherwise determined to be eligible, but appear to District staff to either: (1) Suggest a conflict of interest or potential for personal gain (2) Whose application does not align with the intended use of GIF funds will be presented to the Board of Directors with those potential issues highlighted.

Board Approval Process:

- All GIF applications that have met the underwriting requirements previously outlined in this policy and will therefore be presented to the NWAEDD Board of Directors for consideration must be included in the board packet that is sent to the directors no less than one week prior to the board meeting.
- Final approval of any GIF grant applications must be by a majority vote of the NWAEDD Board of Directors.

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Award Process:

- Applicants that receive approval from the NWAEDD Board of Directors will be notified promptly. An initial packet will include a letter informing the grantee that it has been approved for a GIF grant, along with two grant agreements signed by the NWAEDD Executive Director or his designee. One agreement is for the grant recipient's records and the other is to be signed and returned to NWAEDD. (See Appendix B for an example Grant Agreement)
- Once NWAEDD receives the signed grant agreement, a second packet to the recipient will be generated which will include an official award letter, close-out document, and a check for the awarded grant amount. (See Appendices C & D for Award Letter and Close-Out Form examples)
- Applicants will be required to return the close-out document to NWAEDD once the awarded funds have been expended in accordance with the grant agreement.

Tracking Process:

- A file for each grant recipient will be kept on hand at NWAEDD headquarters. This file will include at a minimum: the signed application, signed grant agreement, copy of the check, award letter, and close-out form, along with any other supporting documentation provided by the grantee.
- NWAEDD staff will track each grant to ensure all documents are returned from the grant recipient. Staff will also ensure all award checks properly clear the bank in a timely manner.
- A GIF grant verification form will also be kept in each grant file. This form will notate the following: Grant Number, Grant Amount, Board Approval Date, Grant Agreement Mailed Date, Grant Agreement Received Date, Check Number, Check Amount, Check Cleared Date, and Close-Out received date. This form will then be signed by two NWAEDD staff members to complete verification.

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Post Award Grant Amendments:

- At times, extenuating circumstances may cause grant recipients to request the alteration of the initial purpose of the grant subsequent to its approval by the NWAEDD Board of Directors. In these instances, the NWAEDD Executive Director or his designee has the authority to approve such changes, provided that the request does not exceed the awarded dollar amount.
- Any grant recipient requesting an amendment to the board approved grant will be required to submit a letter detailing why its initial grant request is no longer valid and a description of the amended project proposal.
- If the Executive Director or his designee determines the amended request still meets the goals of the NWAEDD GIF grant program, NWAEDD will notify the applicant that its amended proposal has been approved pending a signed & updated grant agreement that details the new project scope.
- If the Executive Director or his designee determines the amended request no longer meets the goals of the NWAEDD GIF grant program, the applicant will be notified that its request has been denied and that the awarded GIF Funds should be returned to NWAEDD promptly.
- When these instances occur, the amended proposal will be promptly disclosed to the NWAEDD Board of Directors via email.

Miscellaneous:

- Eligible entities may apply for multiple grants at one time and are still permitted to apply even if they have been awarded a GIF grant that has not been closed out.
- Subject to approval by the NWAEDD Board of Directors, the District may submit a GIF application to assist in defraying the costs of administering the GIF program.

Appendix A

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NORTHWEST ARKANSAS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT, INC. APPLICATION COVER PAGE	
Applicant: _____ Address: _____ _____ City/Zip: _____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____ County: _____	Applicant Preparer: _____ Address: _____ _____ City/Zip: _____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____ Contact Person: _____
Project Summary: 	
Type of Applicant: <input type="checkbox"/> City <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit (Attach 501 C3) <input type="checkbox"/> Other Specify: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Joint* List Joint Members : _____ _____	
<i>*Joint Applicants must be accompanied by an agreement signed by all members applying for funding in the application</i>	
State Senator(s) / District(s): _____ State Representative(s) / District(s): _____	
Budget: Amount Requesting \$ _____ Other Funding (specified in budget) \$ _____ Total Project Budget \$ _____	
Authorized Representative: The signature indicates that I have been authorized to submit an application requesting funding for the proposed project and to the best of my knowledge and belief, all data contained in this application is true and correct. If the application is approved for funding, I am authorized to sign any applicable documents on behalf of the applicant.	
_____ Type Name	_____ Title
_____ Signature	_____ Date

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REQUEST FOR PROJECTS

1. The purpose of this Request for Projects (RFP) is to invite the submission of projects for funding provided by the State of Arkansas through the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District, Inc. Projects should complement the Economic and Community Development Goals of the State of Arkansas.
2. Communication concerning this RFP should be addressed to:

Mr. Joe Willis, Executive Director
Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District, Inc.
P. O. Box 190
Harrison, AR 72602-0190
3. To qualify for consideration, an original completed packet must be received by NWAEDD at the above address.
4. Award, if any, will be made to the responsible organizations whose projects meets the requirements of the general improvement grant program. NWAEDD reserves the right to reject all or any part of a submission or all submissions.
5. An award letter will be issued by the requester to the successful organizations. Successful applicants will be required to enter into a contractual agreement with NWAEDD prior to funding.
6. Any disputes arising from the selection/rejection of any submission will be resolved solely by the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District, Inc.
7. To facilitate submission evaluation, entities shall organize the submission based on the following outline.
 - A. APPLICATION FACT SHEET (*Form Attached*)
Complete and sign the attached form.
 - B. Project Narrative (limit 1 page)
 1. Briefly describe the Applicant Organization
 2. Briefly describe the need and the nature of the applicant project.
 3. Briefly describe how the proposed project will improve the local area and assist with state wide efforts in economic and community development.

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4. State the names of the persons who will be authorized to make representations for the applicant organization, their title, address, and telephone number. State that the person signing the letter will be authorized to bind the applicant.

C. PROJECT BUDGET (*Form Attached*)

Include a line item project budget. Please utilize the budget form which is attached.

D. ATTACHMENTS

If appropriate, attach a project map, project time line and support letter(s). Include other pertinent documents as needed to complete the project description.

SAMPLE

Appendix B

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Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District, Inc. General Improvement Fund Grant Program Grant Agreement

Grantee: «GRANTEE» Grant #: «Grant_»
Grant Amount: \$ «Grant_1».00 Purpose: «Purpose»

GRANTOR

Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District, Inc.
P.O. Box 190
Harrison, AR 72602-0190
Phone: 870-741-5404

GRANTEE

«Grantee»
«Address»
«City», «State», «Zip_Code»
Phone: «Phone»

1. PURPOSE

This Agreement is entered into by Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District, Inc. (NWAEDD), herein referred to as Grantor, and «Grantee», herein referred to as Grantee. The Grantor has received General Improvement Funds from the Arkansas General Assembly to be utilized to assist local public governmental jurisdictions and/or non-profit organizations to plan, develop, promote and/or implement economic and community development projects/activities designed to improve the economic, community and/or social well-being of the citizens of Arkansas. Projects should complement the Economic and Community Development Goals of the State of Arkansas. The Grantee agrees to implement and complete a General Improvement Fund Program project in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement.

2. LEGAL AUTHORITY

By signing this Agreement the Grantee certifies that it possesses legal authority to accept grant funds under the General Improvement Fund program. The act of signing will also certify that the Grantee will comply with all parts of this Agreement, and the Grantee accepts full legal responsibility for properly implementing the project described in the original grant application documents and agrees to expend funds in accordance with the original grant application form.

3. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTING

The Grantee will establish and/or maintain a financial management and accounting system, which conforms to generally accepted accounting principles and complies with requirements of the State Purchasing Law, the General Accounting and Budgetary Procedures Law, and other applicable fiscal control laws of this State and regulations promulgated by the Department of Finance and Administration shall be observed in connection with the utilization of said grant funds.

4. RECORDKEEPING

Grantee will maintain records of all project expenditures on file for a period of three years or until the Grantee's audit for the period in which grant funds were utilized have been conducted. The Grantor and duly authorized officials of the State will have full access and the right to examine any pertinent documents of the Grantee or persons or organizations with which the Grantee may contract, which involve transactions related to this Agreement.

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5. REPORTING

The Grantee agrees to provide Grantor with a final close-out report within sixty (60) days of project completion on which grant funds have been utilized, (See Attachment "A" - Closeout Form).

6. INDEMNIFICATION

The Grantee agrees to follow all local and state laws and regulations. Furthermore, the Grantee agrees to hold harmless the Grantor from any and all claims, suits and actions arising from any act of omission, noncompliance or misuse of grant funds by the Grantee or any employee or agent in the performance of this Grant Agreement.

7. METHOD OF PAYMENT

The Grantor shall make payment of authorized grant funds upon proper execution of this Grant Agreement by the Grantee. The Grantor reserves the right to determine the most appropriate distribution of payments, based upon the nature of the approved project. In no event will the total amount of grant funds to the Grantee for allowable expenses incurred in relation to the project exceed the amount noted on Page 1 of this Agreement as the Grant Amount.

8. MODIFICATIONS

The Grant Agreement may be modified, at the discretion of the Grantor, only with prior written notification from the Grantee. The Grantee will be notified, in writing, of the decision of the Grantor.

Approved for the Grantor

Approved for the Grantee

BY:

BY:

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT, INC.

«GRANTEE»

Jeremy Ragland
Deputy Director

«First_Name» «Last_Name»
«Title»

Date

Date

Appendix C

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NORTHWEST ARKANSAS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT, INC.
NWAEDD PLAZA
818 Highway 62-65-412 North • P.O. Box 190
Harrison, Arkansas 72602-0190
(870) 741-5404

April 15, 2016

«Mr_or_Ms» «First_Name» «Last_Name»
«Title»
«Grantee»
«Address»
«City», «State» «Zip_Code»

Dear «Mr_or_Ms» «Last_Name»:

The Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District (NWAEDD) is pleased to notify you it has approved a General Improvement Fund (GIF) grant to the «Grantee». NWAEDD is funding the GIF project in the amount of «Spell_out_amount» Dollars and No/100's (\$«Grant_t».00).

The GIF grant is a community development grant to «Grantee». The project is to help with «Purpose»

The funds were appropriated to NWAEDD for the GIF program through Acts supported by the 90th Arkansas General Assembly. We wish to thank all the Northwest Arkansas legislators for their support and enabling NWAEDD to serve Arkansas and its citizens.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly if I can be of assistance or provide any information.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Ragland
Assistant Executive Director

Cc: The Honorable «Name», Arkansas «Senator_or_Representative» District «District»

Appendix D

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ATTACHMENT A

Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District, Inc. General Improvement Fund Project Closeout

I do hereby affirm that all funds awarded to this organization under the Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District's General Improvement Fund Program were spent strictly in accordance with the submitted and approved proposed project.

I understand that any monies not spent or not spent in accordance with the approved budget are to be repaid to NWAEDD.

I also affirm that the approved project has been completed and all payments have been made in full. As such, I am officially requesting the formal closure of this grant.

Name:
Title:

Date

Grant Number:

Notary Seal: