

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT GUIDELINES

Agricultural Products Utilization Commission

DEFINITION:

The APUC Technical Assistance Grant is designed to maintain and expand North Dakota's existing, value added businesses. The Grant is intended to help these businesses become more competitive, productive and profitable. The Dakota Manufacturing Extension Partnership (TD MEP) is assisting APUC in fulfilling the objectives of this Grant.

An eligible candidate for this Grant is an existing company located, operated and registered¹ in North Dakota that adds value to agricultural products. As per the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS – pronounced “nakes”) used to categorize business; this would include companies who have a primary or secondary industrial code of 311 (food manufacturers) or 312 (beverage manufacturers).

At its discretion, APUC may consider applications for technical assistance from other value added businesses such as NAICS 111 (crop production) or 112 (animal production). To find the NAICS for your company, use the keyword search on the U.S. Census Bureau web site at <http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html>.

EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE PROJECTS:

The Technical Assistance Grant is designed to help value added businesses; (1) assess their needs, (2) develop plans for improvement, (3) implement those improvements and (4) measure the benefits of those improvements.

Examples of issues, opportunities or problems that companies may address through these improvements include:

- bringing new products to market,
- improving cash flow,
- developing more profitable sales,
- addressing owner and/or key manager succession,
- reducing costs,
- conserving floor space,
- improving lead time to customers,
- improving employee safety,
- increasing manufacturing capacity,
- improving product quality,
- improving processes,

¹ A Corporate registration number (for in-state owned companies) or a Corporate Certificate of Authority registration number (for out-of-state companies) is provided by the North Dakota Secretary of State (ND SOS). It is required of all companies who doing business in North Dakota. The Corporate Division of ND SOS can be reached at 701-328-4284 or at 1-800-352-0867, Extension 8-4284.

- reducing inventory levels,
- reducing maintenance costs and down time,
- improving employee productivity, and
- improving the retention of workers.

TD MEP is making available its services and those available from the national MEP and approved third party contractors to assist value added companies with their improvements. However grant recipients are not obligated to use TD MEP.

EXAMPLES OF NON-ELIGIBLE PROJECTS:

Available funds from the Technical Assistance Grant may not be used for the following;

- acquisition of buildings, equipment and/or vehicles,
- capital for the finance / refinance of business loans, and
- compensation for employees.

PARAMETERS:

The maximum Technical Assistance Grant award available to each company is \$25,000. Companies are only eligible for one grant per year from this program.

Qualified companies interested in this Grant may download an application from the APUC Web site at; www.growingnd.com/apuc.

Upon receipt of the company's application, APUC will request that TD MEP arrange for a visit to the business to conduct an objective assessment of the company with the ownership and/or key managers. This assessment is part of the application process and is provided at no cost to the company. (The assessment will be scaled to the size of the company and tailored to address the specific needs identified in the company's application.) Information from this assessment is confidential. APUC may also conduct its own visit to the company.

The most important improvements for the company will be identified from the results of the assessment. TD MEP (or other consultant) and the company must develop an agreed to and a clearly defined scope of work, including project cost and a method of measuring the impact of the work.

Upon completion, the applicant is responsible for submission of their scope of work (from TD MEP or other provider) to APUC. This scope of work is an integral part of the overall application for funding from this Technical Assistance Grant.

TD MEP will provide a brief overview of the visit to APUC and any recommendations for funding.

TD MEP will strive to complete its visit and assessment of the applicant within two months following receipt of the initial application from APUC.

APUC will make the final determination of a grant award and the amount of that award. Decisions will normally be made during their quarterly meetings.

The most successful recipients of APUC support are those who also invest in their projects. As a result, APUC will look most favorably on the applications that provide company matching dollars and support. For every two dollars of APUC support requested, the business should provide one dollar. In – kind supports can be substituted for financial cash match but should be no more that fifty percent of the total match.

A commitment letter addressed to APUC specifying company commitment to the project is required for consideration.

GUIDELINES:

1. APUC will fund only technical assistance services which are part of an agreed to scope of work between the value added business and TD MEP (or other service provider).
2. Completed applications (assessment & scope of work finalized) will be considered on a quarterly basis with the deadlines on December 1, May 1, June 1, and September 1.
3. Reviews from TD MEP will be obtained as part of the application process. These reviews include a company assessment included as part of a company visit.
4. Generally grants are not to exceed one year.
5. Grants are limited to projects located in North Dakota.
6. The applicant (s) may be asked to make a presentation to the full commission.
7. Each grant application will be considered on an individual basis and on its own merits.
8. Successful applicants should arrange for a fiscal agent – an organization (i.e. accountant, bank, economic development organization, regional council) who can receive funds directly from APUC and release those funds to the company upon proof of expenditure related to the funded project.

The Commission reserves the right to accept, reject, or partially fund any grant application.