

Nebraska Information Technology Commission

Community Technology Fund 2002

Guidelines

Purpose of the Grant

The Nebraska Information Technology Commission announces the fourth annual round of the Community Technology Fund, a competitive matching grant program. The Community Technology Fund promotes the effective and efficient use of information technology in Nebraska communities. The Community Technology Fund of the Nebraska Information Technology Commission was created by state statute (Section 86-1512).

Dates

Applicants must notify the NITC of their intent to submit an application by 5 p.m. CT Friday, January 18, 2002.

Applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. February 15, 2002.

Awards will be announced in April, 2002, and funds will be disbursed in June, 2002. The grant or performance period will run from June 1, 2002 to May 31, 2003.

Eligibility and Award Information

Funding Availability and Size of Awards

It is anticipated that approximately \$200,000 will be available for competitive grants. Awards of **up to \$25,000** will be made.

Eligible Entities

Only public entities are eligible for Community Technology Fund grants. Public entities are defined as entities that can collect taxes and/or their subdivisions. Examples of public entities include public schools, state colleges, Extension, city and county governments, and county hospitals. Unsatisfactory performance of an applicant under prior Community Technology Fund awards may result in that applicant's proposal not being considered for funding.

Funding Priorities

The Community Technology Fund will be used to further projects which utilize information technology to benefit communities or regions in Nebraska. The following funding priorities for the Community Technology Fund 2002 have been identified by the Community Council and approved by the Nebraska Information Technology Commission:

- **Projects which use information technology to address community needs related to community and economic development, the delivery of local government and library services, and health care.**
- **Projects which use information technology to address community needs in innovative ways or projects in which communities are initiating the use of information technology to address community needs.**
- **Projects which demonstrate strong collaboration within a community or region in addressing IT development.**

Eligible/Ineligible Activities and Costs

Activities which support one or more of the funding priorities of the Community Council are eligible for funding unless otherwise restricted by law or regulation.

Salaries or stipends are eligible if they are necessary for the implementation of the overall project. Equipment costs and transmission costs are eligible if they are necessary for the implementation of the overall project.

Buildings, rents, non-telecommunications utilities, food and beverages, and indirect costs are *ineligible* for grant funds but may be used as the match. Payment of staff or consultants to develop proposals is also a nonallowable cost.

Match Requirement

A minimum match of 20 percent of the total project cost is required. The match may be a cash match, an in-kind match, or a combination of the two. An in-kind match can include time, people, machines, buildings, rent, and utilities. Project partners must be able to provide their match requirement with currently available resources. Projects which do not meet the required match will not be considered for funding.

Projects which are funded will be required to document both cash and in-kind matches. Acceptable documentation of an in-kind match include:

- Copies of sign-in sheets for volunteers or other records of volunteer hours.
- A signed letter from an employee's supervisor indicating that he/she has contributed a specified number of hours working on the project.
- A signed letter from the appropriate supervisor/director documenting the use of facilities and equipment.

Award Period

Projects must be completed within 12 months of the initial receipt of funds. The performance period will run from June 1, 2002 to May 31, 2003.

Procedures

Assistance in Preparing Applications

In order to facilitate the preparation of Community Technology Fund applications, sample applications, a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and tips are available on the NITC Web Site (<http://www.nitc.state.ne.us>). Information on the Community Technology Fund can be accessed directly at <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/cc/grants/>.

Submission of Intent to Apply for Funding

All applicants must inform the Nebraska Information Technology Commission of their intent to apply for funding through the Community Technology Fund by Friday, January 18, 2002. Applicants who do not notify the NITC of their intent to apply for funding will not be considered for funding.

This information will be used to facilitate the process of identifying qualified reviewers and to identify potentially duplicative projects. Applicants who submit potentially duplicative projects will be contacted and may be asked to combine their proposals. If potential problems regarding the eligibility of a project are identified, applicants will be notified. It is anticipated that potential problems regarding project eligibility will be identified in only a very small number of submissions.

Applicants should submit the name of the project, sponsoring entity and contact information (including address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address), a list of project partners, geographic area served, and a brief description of the project. No specific format is required. The required information should be e-mailed to Anne Byers at abyers@notes.state.ne.us. Receipt of an applicant's intent to apply for funding will be confirmed by e-mail. If an applicant is unable to send the required information via e-mail, the information can be faxed to (402) 471-4608. If an applicant has e-mailed an intent to apply and has not received a confirmation by 4:00 p.m. CT on January 18, a fax copy can be sent to (402) 471-4608 as a backup.

Submission of Applications

Application Form. The application form is available at <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/cc/grants/>. Applicants may download the form or duplicate it on their own word processor or spreadsheet program. Applicants are asked to submit an electronic copy of the application.

Supporting Documentation. Letters of commitment and letters of support are not required. Information which would otherwise be included in a letter of support or a letter of commitment should be summarized in the application in question 3. Please incorporate other information into the appropriate. Copies of quotations from vendors are also not required. Rather than including a print out of a quotation from a vendor for a new computer, include all relevant information in the budget narrative.

Electronic Submission. Applications should be e-mailed to Anne Byers at abyers@notes.state.ne.us as a Word, WordPerfect, Rich Text Format (RTF), HTML or PDF attachment. Budgets can be submitted in any of the formats listed above or as Excel documents. An electronic copy may also be submitted on an IBM-formatted disk if an applicant does not have e-mail. If an applicant is unable to submit an electronic copy, please contact Anne Byers at (402) 471-3805 in advance to make alternate arrangements for submission.

Receipt of applications will be confirmed by e-mail.

Deadline. Applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. CT, February 15, 2002.

Receipt of applications will be confirmed via e-mail. If an applicant has e-mailed an application and has not received confirmation by 3:00 p.m. CT on February 15, 2002 or if unexpected server problems occur, a fax copy can be sent to (402) 471-4608 as a backup. Fax backups must be received by 5:00 p.m. CT, February 15, 2002.

A list of applications received will also be available on the Community Technology Fund section of the NITC Web site (<http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/cc/grants/>).

Application Review Process

The completed application forms will be reviewed by the Nebraska Information Technology Commission for compliance with minimum eligibility requirements. Ineligible applications will be returned to the applicant with an explanation and recommendation for improving the document.

As part of the technical review, the Technical Panel will approve Community Technology Fund reviewers. Reviewers will include members of the Community Council, Technical Panel and/or their designees, and NITC staff. Other professionals working in the fields of community development and information technology may also serve as committee members.

Eligible applications will be reviewed using the evaluation criteria listed below.

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Score
Goals, Activities and Outcomes	20 points
Project Justification	15 points
Technical Impact	15 points
Implementation Plan	30 points
Budget	20 points
Total	100 points

The maximum number of points which may be awarded for each question and the scoring for the budget section is indicated on the application form.

The Community Council will make recommendations regarding project funding to the Nebraska Information Technology Commission.

A summary of the project evaluations, the technical review conducted by the Technical Panel, and any recommendations of the Community Council will be presented to the Nebraska Information Technology Commission. The Nebraska Information Technology Commission will make the final decision regarding project funding.

Contractual Agreement

Grant recipients are required to enter into a contractual agreement with the Nebraska Information Technology Commission.

Drug Free Work Place Policy

Recipients are also required to submit a copy of their Drug Free Work Place Policy.

Disbursement of Funds

Funds will be disbursed in three installments. Recipients will receive 60% of the grant award in the first and 30% of the award in the second installments. Recipients will receive 10% of the grant award in the third and final installment. The first installment will be disbursed approximately two weeks after the receipt of a signed contract. The second installment will be disbursed approximately two weeks after the receipt of a satisfactory final progress report, including a current and complete accounting. The final installment will be disbursed after the receipt of a satisfactory six-month progress report, including a current and complete accounting. Target dates are listed below:

First Payment	60% of grant award	June 2002
Second Payment	30% of grant award	December 2002
Final Payment	10% of grant award	June 2003

Disbursements will be made only upon receipt of documentation of satisfactory performance of the agreement and a current and complete accounting. The payment of the second disbursement may be accelerated with documentation of more rapid progress. If, at the time the second or final disbursement is scheduled to be made, the project has not expended a sizable portion of previous installments, the payment schedule and/or amount of the second installment may be renegotiated.

Reporting Requirements

Grant recipients will be required to submit a progress report every six months until the project is completed. It is the expectation of the Nebraska Information Technology Commission that no project will require more than 12 months to complete.

The first progress report, including a complete and current accounting, will be due December 1, 2002.

A full report, detailing the results of the project and including a complete and current accounting, will be required by June 1, 2003. This accounting should include receipts or invoices of all expenditures made with grant funds and documentation of cash and in-kind matches. A copy of materials created from this project should also be submitted. This information will be publicized across the state so that everyone can benefit from the work supported by Community Technology Grant funds.

Amendments to the Agreement

Requests to amend the agreement must be received in writing by the Nebraska Information Technology Commission. Requests which substantially change the scope of the project will be brought before the Community Council for approval.

Right to Audit

The NITC reserves the right to audit any and all grant projects for a period of 2 years after project completion.

For More Information

For further information, please contact:

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