



**NOTICE OF FUNDING
AVAILABILITY**

**COVID-19 RESPONSE
AND RECOVERY GRANT
PROGRAM**

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Funding Announcement Summary

County Name: Seward County

Funding Opportunity Title: COVID-19 Response and Recovery Grant Program

Announcement Date: September 24, 2020

Announcement Type: Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the Response and Recovery Program under the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) within the Coronavirus, Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act or Act).

Application Submissions: Applicants must submit a completed Application and all associated Application exhibits, as described in this NOFA, by October 22, 2020.

- Electronic Application – Applicants must follow instructions provided within this document and submit via email in one ZIP Compressed file. No hard copies will be accepted.

Funding Opportunity Description: In accordance with Seward County's Direct Aid Plan, the Response and Recovery Grant Program was allocated one million ninety-one thousand two hundred seventy-seven dollars and seventy-seven cents (\$1,091,277.77) of the total Coronavirus Relief Funds received by the State of Kansas. Under the conditions of this NOFA it is the intent of Seward County to award grant funds to eligible Applicants in an individual award amount not to exceed one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00), unless there is a significant, demonstrated need.

This NOFA is the initial process in identifying organizations and entities to participate in the Program. After the NOFA process has closed and projects are selected, Seward County will implement the Program utilizing grant agreements with notified awardees.

Contact:

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SPARK GRANT PROGRAM
Response and Recovery Grant Program
VERSION CONTROL

VERSION NUMBER	DATE REVISED	DESCRIPTION OF REVISIONS
1	September 18, 2020	Original version
2	September 30, 2020	Revised to include updated contact information and program intake dates.
3		
4		
5		
6		

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1. Overview

On March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared the COVID-19 outbreak a national emergency in the United States beginning on March 1, 2020; pursuant to Sections 201 and 301 of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. § 1601, et seq. and consistent with Section 1135 of the Social Security Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 1320b-5).

The COVID-19 outbreak has caused unprecedented negative impacts on the nation's businesses, nonprofit organizations, local governmental agencies, families, and citizens. To address the public health and economic threats posed by COVID-19, the President signed into law the Coronavirus, Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act ("CARES Act" or "Act"). The CARES Act established the Coronavirus Relief Fund ("CRF") and appropriated \$150 billion to the Fund, of which, the State of Kansas received a \$1.25 billion state-wide allocation. The State has allocated \$6,419,281 dollars of CARES funding to Seward County to offset certain costs associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The State of Kansas, as the administering entity of the state CRF, has made available funding through the Department of Treasury, to begin the process of safely, strategically, and proactively providing the County with the resources required to both mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and invest in the County's long-term economic recovery. The State of Kansas launched the "Strengthening People and Revitalizing Kansas" (SPARK) program to administer the CRF dollars. This document will use SPARK and CRF interchangeably.

As part of its strategy to leverage local intellectual capital and expertise, Seward County has established the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Program (hereinafter, referred to as the "Program") designed to give maximum flexibility to local entities to propose recovery initiatives that are right sized for targeted relief of the community served.

This Program has been allocated a total of one million ninety-one thousand two hundred seventy-seven dollars and seventy-seven cents (\$1,091,277.77) in the County's Direct Aid Plan. The maximum award amount for this Program is one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00). ¹Applicants will be required to submit a completed Application, via all required exhibits, as outlined under the conditions of this Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA).

Seward County is seeking qualified Applicants to enter into Grant Agreements for the implementation of the Program. Entities eligible to apply are small businesses, private nonprofit organizations and governmental entities. The collaboration of the County with local entities will ensure the Program's success in its response to and mitigation of the impacts of COVID-19.

1.1. Definitions

This section sets forth the key defined terms used throughout these guidelines.

- **Applicant:** An entity that has applied for this Program.
- **Awardee:** An Applicant who applies for and is awarded a grant under this Program.
- **Governmental Organization:** An entity recognized as a political subdivision or municipality under the laws of the State of Kansas such as an incorporated city, Unified school district, community college, emergency services district, other special district, joint board, or other entity defined as a political subdivision under the laws of Kansas that maintains the capability to provide mutual aid.

¹ The County reserves the right to make exceptions to the award cap for projects it deems strategic to the County's recovery from COVID-19.

- **Grant Agreement:** A signed contract between the County and Awardees establishing the terms and conditions of the funding awarded.
- **Small Business:** A business that is composed of seventy-five (75) or fewer full-time equivalent (FTE) employees.
- **Private Nonprofit Organization:** A non-governmental agency or entity that currently has an effective ruling letter from the IRS granting tax exemption under sections 501(c), (d), or (e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, or satisfactory evidence from the State that the non-revenue producing organization or entity is a non-profit one organized or doing business under the State law, or a faith-based organization.

2. Funding Opportunity Description

2.1. Program Description

Funding provided under this NOFA is intended to fund projects that address the most urgent and emerging needs of the County as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and serve to build a better, more resilient community. Selection for award under this NOFA will be made by the Board of County Commissioners (**BoCC**), based on the qualifications of the Applicant and viability of proposed activities in compliance with funding requirements. Funding for this Program will be distributed on a reimbursement basis for the eligible expense of grant funds, as supported by substantial documentation.

Funding up to one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00) total, is available for each Applicant under the Program; however, it is possible that not all Applicants will receive the maximum amount as funding will be based on the project proposed in the Application. The County reserves the right to award in excess of the max amount based on BoCC deliberations.

The Response and Recovery Program NOFA is seeking Applications from small businesses, private nonprofits, and governmental entities that propose programs that respond to and mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Program will provide funding to entities that:

- Propose a short-term project that mitigates the impacts of COVID-19 by addressing urgent and emerging needs in the community;
- Operate within the County;
- Demonstrate through an application the organizational capacity to successfully execute the proposed project;
- Propose a viable budget to achieve the proposed project.

The County has established three Program priorities as described below to mitigate the impact of COVID-19:

- **Connectivity:** proposals that focus on the enhancement, installation, and fortification of digital infrastructure to support digitization that facilitates distance learning, telemedicine, and teleworking.
- **Workforce development:** proposals that provide technical assistance to small businesses, workforce retraining, and support services to assist unemployed and/or underemployed workers.

- **Childcare:** proposals that support the increased demand for affordable and accessible childcare services within the County.

All applications will be considered, meeting these above priorities is not a requirement for the Program. However, applications that address these County established priorities will be awarded additional points in the scoring process as described in Sections 4.1 and 4.3.

2.2. Eligible Applicants

This Program is open to small businesses, private nonprofits, and governmental organizations who propose projects that respond to or mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Small businesses and private non-profits must be located and registered to operate within Seward County. Governmental entities as defined in Section 1.1, must be organized as a political subdivision or municipality under the laws of the State of Kansas.

2.3. Use of Funds

The CARES Act stipulates that payments from the CRF may only be used to cover costs that:

1. Are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19);
2. Were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020 (the date of enactment of the CARES Act) for the State or other governmental entities; and
3. Were incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020 and ends on December 30, 2020.

The Treasury has provided guidance that the term “due to” the public health emergency means that expenditures must be used for actions taken to respond to the public health emergency and expenditures incurred to respond to second-order effects of the emergency. This Program is designed to address these first and second order effects of the pandemic.

To qualify for funding under this Program, all expenditures must meet the following requisites:

- All expenditures must meet the guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Treasury for the Coronavirus Relief Fund². The recipient must agree to return any funds not spent in accordance with the Act.
- All expenditures must be supported by records which adequately demonstrate that the amount of payments from the Program that have been expended are in accordance with section 601 (d) of the Social Security Act. In the case of an audit, the County reserves the right to request any documentation which it deems necessary to collect.
- These funds may not be redistributed.

² Guidance from the U.S. Department of Treasury may be updated from time to time and is publicly available at <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/cares/state-and-local-governments>. All applicable updated guidance promulgated by the US Treasury is considered incorporated in this guideline by reference.

Nonexclusive **eligible use of funds** for the Program include, but are not limited to:

- Awardee staff salaries, benefits and supplies that are directly associated with implementing the proposed Program;
- Enhancement, installation, and fortification of digital infrastructure to respond to increased needs due to the COVID19 public health emergency;
- Technical and life skills training, including support services to assist unemployed and/or underemployed workers' increased needs due to the COVID19 public health emergency;
- Creation or expansion of childcare services with special considerations to enable compliance with COVID-19 public health precautions;
- Emergency Assistance initiatives; and
 - Food Security; including delivery to residents, for example, senior citizens and other vulnerable populations, to enable compliance with COVID-19 public health precautions;
 - Mental Health; human services, and similar employees whose services are substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID19 public health emergency;
 - Housing; Expenses for quarantining individuals and similar for responding to the COVID19 public health emergency;
- Other measures to respond to or mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

Nonexclusive **ineligible use of funds** for the Program include, but are not limited to:

- Large scale construction activities;
- Reimbursement for costs incurred prior to application to the Program;
- Purchase of equipment not directly tied to Program work;
- Political or religious activities;
- Entertainment, including amusement, recreation and social activities; food and alcohol associated with parties or socials, meals, lodging, transportation, and gratuities associated with entertainment;
- Pre-award costs, including preparation of the grant proposal;
- Fundraising activities;
- Operating costs associated with day-to-day functions of the entity not dedicated to the approved project;
- Payroll benefits expenses for employees whose work duties are not dedicated to the approved project; and
- Expenses not incurred due to the public health emergency COVID-19.

2.4. Cost Limitations

Selected Applicants will execute a Grant Agreement with Seward County which provides direct reimbursement of costs associated with eligible activities defined in this NOFA. Costs incurred in the performance of the Program, must be allowable, allocable and reasonable in accordance with the Grant Agreement. The County reserves the right to reject funding requests for any cost outside of the scope of the Program.

2.5. Period of Performance

If awarded, all grant funding distributed as part of this Program must be incurred by December 30, 2020. Grant funds can be used to cover eligible expenses incurred from start of the Grant Agreement through December 30, 2020. Awardees must submit a close-out report by January 30, 2020, that includes source documentation of paid eligible expenses (paid invoice and proof of payment).

3. NOFA Procedures

3.1. NOFA Documents

Copies of this NOFA are available for download by Applicants at the Seward County website. To submit an Application, Applicants are required to go to the Seward County website, download the NOFA documents and send the completed application for consideration via the email address response@sewardcountyks.org.

A schedule summary of the major activities associated with this NOFA is presented in Table 1 below. The dates and activities are subject to change. Therefore, Applicants are encouraged to periodically review the Seward County website for regular updates and other important information, which may alter the terms or requirements of this NOFA.

Table 1: NOFA Schedule³

Event	Date
NOFA Documents Availability	09/24/20
Application Due Date	10/22/20
Application Evaluation Period (Expected)	From: 10/22/20
	Up To: 11/02/20
Notice of Award (Expected)	11/06/20
Execution of the Grant Agreement (Expected)	11/09/20
Project Completion Deadline	12/30/20
Project Closeout Report Deadline	01/30/21

³ In order to expedite the program and allow maximum time to execute projects, the Program will make full faith efforts to evaluate applications as they are received rather than wait until the commencement of the application evaluation period.

Please note that the NOFA timeline and target dates may change. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to periodically review the Seward County Website for regular updates and other important information.

3.2. Correspondence and Inquiries

Correspondence and inquiries regarding this NOFA must be submitted to Seward County via the email address Response@sewardcountyks.org and shall reference this specific NOFA in the subject line of the email. Each prospective Applicant may submit questions or ask for clarifications as to the intent of this NOFA. Verbal inquiries or emails sent to addresses not specified in this NOFA will not be addressed or considered.

3.3. Representations for Application Submission

All costs associated with the response to this NOFA are the sole responsibility of the Applicant. No applicant is guaranteed an award under this NOFA.

The County reserves the right, without limitations, to reject partially or completely any/all Applications received in response to this NOFA. The County further reserves the right, without limitations, to make such investigations, as it deems necessary, as to the qualifications or perceived conflicts of interest of any/all entities submitting Applications in response to this NOFA.

By submitting an Application, the Applicant shall comply with all applicable federal and local laws and regulations. Failure to disclose accurate and complete information or making false representations as part of the NOFA application, may affect eligibility and may result in disqualification from the NOFA evaluation process and possibility of award. The County reserves the right, without limitations, to: (i) grant more than one award and/or select more than one Applicant; and (ii) amend the Grant Agreement(s) of the selected Applicant(s).

3.4. Application Modification or Withdrawal

An Applicant may modify or withdraw an Application at any time before the Application Due Date.

3.5. Ownership of Applications

All materials submitted in response to this NOFA will be the property of the County and will not be returned. Selection or rejection of an Application does not affect this provision.

4. Application Requirements

Each Application received should comply with the requirements set forth in the following sections and will be scored as described below.

4.1. Application Format

Application materials shall be downloaded through the County's Website (<http://www.sewardcountyks.org/>) following specific requirements contained therein. Applications will be completed by filling in forms and information as instructed. Applications are to be submitted on the Application Due Date stated in the Schedule Section of this NOFA. Responses to the NOFA submitted after the prescribed deadline will not be accepted.

All applications must include the required exhibits and adhere to the following parameters:

- Applications accepted by the Program shall be sent in one single email attachment, via a compressed zip file format and have a maximum file size of 50 MB;
- Applicants shall download, complete and submit the following documents:

- **Exhibit A:** Applicant Information and Qualifications
 - **Exhibit B:** Program Proposal
 - **Exhibit C:** Proposed Budget
 - **Exhibit D:** Non-Conflict of Interest Certification
- Applicants may submit supporting documents to the application, however they are not required to do so.

4.2. Application Scoring

Table 2 presents the maximum points for the requirements of the Applications. The Application will have a maximum score of one hundred (100) points. For details regarding the distribution of scoring for each specific aspect of the Application, please refer to the corresponding section. Applications will be scored based on the below listed criteria and then compared against all others received.

Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Table 2: Application Scoring Criteria

Criteria	Scoring Factor
Applicant Information and Qualifications	20
Program Proposal	50
Alignment with County Funding Priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Connectivity ▪ Workforce development ▪ Childcare 	10
Proposed Budget	20
TOTAL	100

4.3. Mandatory Application Exhibits

Applicants shall complete the following Exhibits for their Application to be evaluated. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in the disqualification of the Applicant. Mandatory Exhibits for this NOFA are as follows:

4.3.1. Exhibit A: Applicant Information and Qualifications

Applicants must submit entity information including the identification of an Authorized Signing Official/Authorized Representative. This named person must be authorized to bind the Entity in matters related to the Contract. Applicant must also provide an overview of the organization and its capacity to administer the program, including:

- A description of the Applicant’s organization, including its history, and experience;
- A description of the qualifications and experience of the key program staff who will be part of administering the proposed project;

- If applicable, provide the names and descriptions of partner agencies or organizations which will be involved in the project and the nature of the partnership with the Applicant (businesses, local agencies, non-profits, schools, etc.).

4.3.2. Exhibit B: Project Proposal

Applicants must complete a project proposal, including:

- Detailed description of the proposed project including strategies for the execution of the project within the period of performance defined in Section 2.5;
- Detailed description of the proposed beneficiaries for the project, and of comparable projects or programs currently available in the service area as applicable;
- Discussion of the need for the proposed project, including an analysis of current gaps due to COVID-19 and projected demand;
- List of outcomes to reflect the impact of the project, and description of how the outcomes will be measured.

Applicants will receive up to ten (10) points if the proposed project is in alignment with the County funding priorities of connectivity, workforce development or childcare as described in Section 2.1.

4.3.3. Exhibit C: Proposed Budget

Applicants must provide a Project Budget with estimated costs for staffing, operating expenses and equipment. This budget should not exceed the maximum award amount for this Program of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00).

4.3.4. Exhibit D: Non-conflict of Interest Certification

Applicants must read and sign the non-conflict of interest certification as part of the completed application process. This document must be signed by the entity's authorized representative.

5. Evaluation and Selection

The selection of Applicants will be conducted through a review of submitted Applications. Applications will be evaluated based on the scoring criteria outlined above and according to the processes described below.

5.1. Evaluation, Selection and Award

Upon closure of the Application submission period, the Board of County Commissioners will evaluate each Application based on the criteria stated in this NOFA.

Applications will be scored and ranked in accordance with the points outlined in this NOFA. The Applicant(s) whose Application(s) scored the highest points shall become the selected Applicant(s). The BoCC may request clarifications to Applicants to gain additional understanding of the Applications.

The number of awards will depend on the number of applicants and the amount of funds requested in their applications. After the final determinations from the BoCC, the County will issue the award notice and execute a Grant Agreement.

5.2. Errors in Applications

Seward County reserves the right, without limitations, to reject an Application that contains an error or omission. The County also reserves the right, without limitations, to request correction of any errors or omissions and/or to request any clarification or additional information from any Applicant, without opening clarifications for all Applicants. No communication with Applicant does not mean that the County is in any way obligated to make an award and does not create rights for the Applicant to receive an award under this NOFA.

5.3. Confidentiality of Responses and Proprietary Information

Upon completion of the NOFA, the County may publish its report regarding the qualification and selection process. Due to the nature of this NOFA, some confidentiality or proprietary claims cannot be assured. Provision of any information marked as confidential or proprietary shall not prevent the County from disclosing such information if required by law. The ultimately awarded Agreement(s) and the budget set forth therein shall not be considered confidential or proprietary and such information may be made publicly available.

All the information (trade secrets, proprietary, or confidential information) submitted as part of this NOFA will be made available at Federal or state agency request that requires said information for Program evaluation and compliance purposes.

END OF NOFA