

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Sandoval County to Partner with USDA Rural on Small Business Economic Development and Outreach

**Question:** *What Are USDA Rural Business Development Grants (RBDG) Programs?*

**Answer:** Grants made under this program will be made to eligible entities for use in funding various business opportunity and business enterprise projects that serve rural areas. This program consolidates the Rural Business Enterprise Grant and the Rural Business Opportunity Grant.

**Question:** *Who is eligible to apply for these grants?*

**Answer:** Public bodies/Governmental entities including states, counties, cities, authorities, districts, and educational institutions

- Non-profit organizations
- Federally recognized tribal groups

Grants are received and administered by eligible applicants. Grants are not made directly to businesses being assisted through the grant.

**Question:** *What are the program requirements?*

**Answer:** Applicants must provide a System of Awards Management (SAM) registration number (CAGE code) and a Dun and Bradstreet number (DUNS). Instructions for obtaining these registrations can be found at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants>, under the index “Forms and Resources.”

**Eligible Projects.** Projects must comply with either the business opportunity type grant or a business enterprise type grant. The applicant must identify which type it is applying for.

**Question:** *What is the Technical Assistance Network (TSN) Initiative?*

**Answer:** On September 1, 2019, Sandoval County received notice of award of its first USDA Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG). The RBDG funding will be used to deploy a pilot program of onsite Small Business Technical Assistance to rural communities within an identified rural corridor in Sandoval and Bernalillo Counties. The initiative/project award is called the Technical Assistance Network (TSN).

**Question:** *How did the TSN qualify as a RBDG project?*

**Answer:** The County’s Stronger Economic Together (SET) strategy created in 2018 provide the bases for the RBDG application. SET draws upon the commonalities of rural businesses to create a framework of resource partnership needed to support small business along rural corridors.

***Question:*** *How was the Program was created?*

***Answer:*** In 2018, Sandoval County worked as part of a successful collaboration with community and economic development departments in Sandoval, Bernalillo and Los Alamos Counties to establish a New Mexico Mid-Central Rural Corridor, Region Economic Development Plan. As a result of this plan, the Stronger Economic Together (SET) Region Collaboration was created. That same year, USDA Rural approved the SET Corridor Strategy. As an approved USDA Rural plan, Sandoval County was able to leverage SET and its partnerships and apply for a USDA Rural RBDG grant.

The SET embraces the importance of bridging the gap of services that exists between rural and urban business communities. As a plan, SET is also available to partnering counties to use to build corridor framework plans. Through corridor plans communities are able to collect the essential needed when applying for these types of business development grants.

***Question:*** *How will the Program Work?*

***Answer:*** The program will first create a Traveling Support Network (TSN). The TSN will serve as an onsite business consulting resource provider. The TSN will be led by Daniel Quijano, a career small business consultant. The TSN will work to assemble the small business resource team equipped to provide technical assistance in marketing, advertising, social media marketing, small business financing, legal assistance and more. The TSN will also partner with the existing resource providers including, SBA, SBDC, and WESST to assist with business outreach need to address the needs of rural communities.

***Question:*** *What is the duration of the program?*

***Answer:*** As first year pilot, the TSN strategy is to deliver a very individualized program delivery method similar to hiring an individual business consultant.

***Question:*** *Is there a chance the program could receive additional funds?*

***Answer:*** Ultimately, the measured success of the program will require bridging the gap between the needs of rural business owners with the expertise of neighboring urban business resource programs. The goal of the program is to also continue the conversation surrounding the importance of collaboration between corridor communities. Corridor collaboration can strengthen local economies, encourage business growth and create an even greater feeling of community. Within many industry growth sectors, a rural corridor strategy, can mean a best practice learned by one business owner travels throughout a corridor area of similar businesses. Such is the case for tourism and hospitality industry, where the returning customer base increases through best business delivery and an areas customer service appeal.

***Question:*** *Who are the partner communities to first benefit from the TSN?*

***Answer:*** The SET partner counties include Sandoval, Bernalillo and Los Alamos Counties. The first year grant funding will begin with rural communities in Sandoval, and Bernalillo Counties. The designated first year SET corridor will include the communities of Jemez Pueblo, Jemez

Springs, Tijeras and Cedar Crest. Community outreach within these communities will begin November, 2019. For more information about the Traveling Support Network Program (TSN) please contact Dora M. Dominguez, Sandoval County Director of County Business & Economic Development (505) 404-5825 or email at [ddominguez@sandovalcountynm.gov](mailto:ddominguez@sandovalcountynm.gov)

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