Pre-Project Planning Program Guidelines

This program recognizes that many small and mid-sized communities often do not have adequate resources to develop and implement economic development projects that can attract private investment and create new jobs in the community. Gaps may include a lack of personnel and/or technical expertise required to advance projects from concept and plan to implementation. JobsOhio seeks to provide targeted technical assistance to address those gaps in capacity and expertise to ultimately generate more actionable projects.

Program Details

- The Pre-Project Planning Grants are not more than 50% of the total costs of the services provided and will not exceed $50,000.
- Assistance will be based on project needs as determined by JobsOhio, usually a service agreement that is a three-party agreement between the community, JobsOhio, and the vendor.
- While program eligibility requirements exist, meeting those requirements is not indicative the project will receive approval or support.



Guiding Principles for Program

- The desired outcome is a project that is ready to seek funding for implementation. Projects will be catalytic in nature, resulting in additional investment in the surrounding area.
- Technical assistance will help to advance viable development projects in distressed areas that improve a community's ability to attract private investment.
- JobsOhio Network Partners will be engaged to provide guidance in the selection of communities and projects for support.
- Services offered will advance projects, but will also advance a community's capabilities moving forward as this will be an educational engagement for community leaders.
- Potential projects should align with broader JobsOhio goals for sites and economic development projects. As such, they will have the potential to increase real estate inventory and job creation potential in participating communities.
- If JobsOhio is providing a grant directly to the community, the applicant must demonstrate the gap in local resources to cover the full cost of the outsourced services.

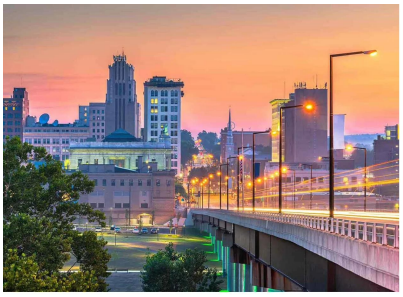
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Scope of Assistance

Planning services are primarily intended to assist communities with identified, prospective projects that they have been unable to implement but that are strategic and potentially catalytic in nature. Reasons for lack of implementation will be tied not necessarily to funding for projects directly, but to lack of resources and capacity to take a project from planning or ideation phase to implementation. Assistance provided may include the following:

1) **Market/Industry Study:** Service will be to identify the best uses for the project site based on the goals and assets within the community. If community feels they have identified an appropriate market, the service may affirm and provide additional insights.
2) **Building or Site Due Diligence:** Due diligence must be completed in order to move a project from idea to implementation. This often presents a challenge to communities that lack resources and expertise. Examples include architectural or site renderings, structural engineering evaluations, business plans and financial pro formas.
3) **Capacity Planning/Stakeholder Coordination:** In many cases, a leader in the community may have project ideas but lack the capacity to organize and mobilize the proper partners in the community to make the project a success. Technical assistance will evaluate who the necessary partners are, engage and convene those partners, and identify necessary action items and leaders for those actions.
4) **Capital/Budget Planning:** Communities may need to develop, refine, or implement public financing tools to advance funding for the project. Examples may include TIFs, BIDs, or CRAs.
5) **Policy Recommendations:** In some cases, policy changes or additions may be required to advance a project. Policy could be related to financial tools, zoning, permitting, approvals, or development guidelines.
6) **Development Timeline Planning:** Depending on the complexity of the project, assistance in developing a timeline for implementation will be prepared with the community. The timeline will include key milestones related to policy, infrastructure, funding, and zoning.
7) **Marketing and Prospectus Development:** To successfully market a new site or building, the community must know how to market the site to prospective users or developers. This could include developing marketing materials and content for the site that are required to pitch to end users.

Under special consideration, JobsOhio may recommend assistance in identifying projects, mapping community assets, and establishing community vision. However, priority will be given to communities that have identified a potential project opportunity.



Pre-Project Planning Program Guidelines

Eligible Applicants

- Eligible applicants will generally be public sector agencies responsible for the planning function in their county or community and may include local governments, local economic development organizations, non-profit public/private partnerships, and port authorities.
- Under special considerations applicants may include established neighborhood groups, business improvement districts, or other private companies. These applicants must have the support of the governmental planning agency and the business community.
- Eligible communities will be the same as designated in the Vibrant Communities Program.

Applicant Requirements

Applicants for project planning assistance will need the following:

1) **Identified Local Leader:** This person will serve as a point of contact for the entire planning process. This may or may not be a dedicated full/part-time professional planner, but if the community has a dedicated planner, that individual should be involved.
    a. For neighborhood groups, the group should have at least one dedicated staff member capable of carrying out the plan and project. For those groups with a part-time staff, demonstrated partnership with existing city staff will be required.
2) **Identified Stakeholders:** This should be representative of the community or neighborhood and should include the public, non-profit groups, schools, private industry, etc. Each should be willing and able to provide letters of support at the time of submission.

Community and Project Selection

Eligible communities may submit requests for services on a rolling basis through JobsOhio and its Network Partners. Requests will be vetted by JobsOhio. Vetting criteria may include:

- Anticipated project feasibility: Projects should be seen as attainable in 1-3 years with proper support to reduce barriers to implementation.
- Projects should align with broader JobsOhio mission and goals including job creation, capital investment, and contribution to improved quality of place.
- Strength of community stakeholder engagement
- Project alignment with community goals and vision
- Investor, developer, or private sector interest in the project and anticipated costs of project completion
- Previous work to advance the project that has been completed or attempted locally

JobsOhio may vet projects for alignment with other JobsOhio initiatives and goals. For example, If a community identifies a greenfield opportunity rather than a redevelopment project, that site should meet the minimum requirements for SiteOhio consideration to be considered for this technical assistance.