**Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge (RPIC) Overview**

**Deadline: July 26, 2021**

Must be submitted through grants.gov (start early)

**Purpose**

* To provide planning support, technical assistance, and training to rural communities for placemaking activities
* To encourage economic and social development
* To support rural community leaders to create quality places where people want to live, work, and play. Key elements of quality places include, but are not limited to
  + Mix of uses
  + Effective public spaces
  + Broadband capability
  + Transportation options
  + Multiple housing options
  + Preservation of historic structure
  + Respect of community heritage, arts, culture, creativity, recreation, and green space
  + **Targeted Impacts (up to 20 points):**
* Economically-distressed communities
* Enhancing broadband infrastructure, capacity, and deployment

**What is “placemaking?”**

* Defined as “a collaborative process among public, private, philanthropic and community partners to strategically improve the social, cultural, and economic structure of a community” (i.e., “creating quality places where people want to live, work, and play”)
* Based on a sense of place with qualitative and quantitative outcomes
* “Through intentional design, placemaking helps boost the connection between the people in a community and the spaces they share.”

**Funding and Constraints**

* Maximum Award: $250,000
* Minimum 15 percent match of the amount requested (cash, third-party pledge/in-kind)
* Indirect cost rate is limited to 10 percent of direct charges (excluded from match)
* Maximum period of performance is 2 years: October 1, 2021, ending no later than September 30, 2023

**Funds MAY be used to:**

* Provide technical assistance and training to help rural communities identify and gather partners, establish community needs, and develop placemaking plans.
* Enhance capacity for broadband access, preserve cultural and historic structures, and support the development of transportation, housing, and recreational spaces.
* Support provided may include, but is not limited to:
  + Evidence-based understanding of community assets, challenges, and opportunities
  + Description of the distinct qualities of the community—both positive and negative
  + Vision statement that summarizes the most important outcomes that the community wants to see achieved
  + Statement of values that identifies the principles that leaders and stakeholders should use in determining strategies
  + Evidence of broad community participation, public input, and buy-in

**Funds MAY NOT be used to pay for:**

* + Construction (in any form)
  + Intermediary preparation of strategic plans for recipients
  + Grants to individuals
  + Purchasing real estate or vehicles
  + Individual development accounts
  + Conflict of interest, or appearance thereof, involving any action by USDA or to pay an outstanding court judgment (other than US Tax Court)

**Key Factors**

* See Proposal Narrative Outline for detailed Evaluation Criteria
* Multijurisdictional or multisectoral plans: **Must** demonstrate existing and proposed partnerships with public, private, philanthropic, and community partners; additional emphasis on combining federal, Tribal, state and/or local resources
* Required to participate substantially in the project alongside RD staff
  + Examples of measurable substantial involvement include, but are not limited to, joint convenings of community members, partners, and stakeholders; joint delivery of training for RD programs; development of training sessions and outreach materials
* Support rural communities’ ability to qualify for priority funding under Section 379H of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, ‘‘Strategic economic and community development’’ [7 U.S.C. 2008]. Identify potential projects that can be funded through RD programs and other federal, state, local or private sector resources.

**More Information:** Full announcement (NOFA) at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-05-27/pdf/2021-10963.pdf>

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