

APPLICATION PACKET

GIF FUNDED COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT GRANT

Cycle I Deadline: November 20, 2009

We will begin accepting applications for this cycle on September 1, 2009.

- **CITY AND COUNTY ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS**



**STATE OF ARKANSAS
DEPARTMENT OF RURAL SERVICES
ARKANSAS RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

For Questions or More Information, Contact:
GIF Community Enhancement Grant Coordinator
101 East Capitol, Suite 202
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 682.6011
888.787.2527 Toll Free
Email: rural.arkansas@arkansas.gov

Arkansas Rural Development Commission and The Department of Rural Services

The Department of Rural Services (DRS, formerly the Office of Rural Advocacy) is a state agency charged with assisting rural communities with a population of 20,000 and under. Established under Act 302 of 1991, DRS assists local agencies in rural areas with information and technical assistance. Currently, more than 80% of Arkansans live in rural areas.

The Arkansas Rural Development Commission (ARDC) is a group of citizens from around rural Arkansas charged with overseeing the programs of DRS. Seven of its members are appointed by the Governor, two are appointed by the Senate President Pro-Tem, and two are appointed by the Speaker of the House. Commissioners serve five-year terms, and meet throughout the year to discuss rural issues that affect Arkansans.

The mission of these two groups is to ***"Enhance the quality of life in rural Arkansas."***

One focus of the agency is to be a source of information for rural citizens and provide support services to rural communities. The Department of Rural Services publishes a bi-annual newsletter that covers rural policies and topics. The agency also hosts an annual conference and local forums around the state throughout the year.

In 2007 the Arkansas Legislature changed the way projects were funded with the state's \$919 million surplus. Instead of funding lawmakers' individual projects, the Legislature appropriated money to existing agencies and funds to be distributed throughout the state. This year the Department of Rural Services received approximately \$5,704,500.00 to put toward grant programs benefiting rural Arkansas. DRS divided the money into three different grant appropriations according to the acts.

For information about the other DRS grant programs visit our website at www.arkansas.gov/drs or call 1-888-787-2527.

General Information and Eligibility

Through the GIF Funded Community Enhancement Grant, the Arkansas Rural Development Commission (ARDC) and the Department of Rural Services strive to enhance quality of life in the state by providing incentive grants. The GIF Funded Community Enhancement Grant will assist rural communities with the development and improvement of local facilities.

Incorporated cities and towns and unincorporated communities in RURAL areas of **less than 20,000 in population** (verifiable by current U.S. Census information) are **eligible** to apply for assistance through the GIF Funded Community Enhancement Grant. In keeping with our enabling legislation, a rural area is defined, for the purpose of this program, as “all the territory of the State of Arkansas that is not within the outer boundary of any city or town having a population of 20,000 or more according to the latest federal census or within such a city’s or town’s neighboring urbanized areas.”

What Type of Projects are Eligible?

Projects eligible for funding consideration under the GIF Funded Community Enhancement Grant include, but are not limited to:

- Renovations, new construction or additions, and equipment to publicly owned buildings (police department equipment, healthcare facility equipment, child care facilities, community centers, senior/youth centers, libraries, museums, emergency shelters, recycling centers, etc.);
- Renovations, new construction or additions, and equipment to municipal buildings (courthouses or courthouse annexes, city halls, police stations, sheriffs offices, and city or county jails);
- Renovations, new construction, new equipment, or additions to parks and other publicly owned recreational facilities (baseball/softball fields, landscape/beautification projects, park and picnic areas, jogging/walking trails, etc.).
- GIF grant funding may be used to purchase real estate.
- Maintenance costs and Operational costs (this includes supplies and training program fees)

Other Eligibility Requirements

- A county may apply for a GIF-3 (County Fair) grant during the same cycle as applying for a GIF-1 (Community Enhancement) or GIF-2 (Fire Protection) grant. However, a GIF-1 grant and a GIF-2 grant may not be applied for by an entity during the same cycle.
- If an entity is awarded GIF funding during the first cycle, the entity may apply for additional GIF funding during future cycles.
- Private, non-profit associations can apply for GIF money, but they must go through their city or county.

Note: If you are not positive that your project is eligible, please call and speak to a Grants Coordinator at 1-888-787-2527

What Type of Projects are Ineligible?

Projects **NOT** eligible for funding consideration under the GIF Funded Community Enhancement Grant, but again are not limited to:

1. fairground and rodeo construction owned by incorporated associations (see DRS County Fair Building Grant or DRS GIF County Fair Grant for fairground and public rodeo projects)
2. costs associated with normal day-to-day operations or maintenance;
3. debt financing of any type (new or existing). Debt financing is defined for the purpose of this program as reimbursement of new or existing loans, loan payments, or reimbursement for equipment, facilities, labor, or property already purchased or constructed;
4. Utility bills, travel, or other personnel related expenses;

Due to the limited amount of funds available for rural communities, the Arkansas Rural Development Commission has elected to make the following entities and projects **ineligible** for grant funding:

- Schools
- Elections

Funding Availability

Applicants with an eligible project may apply for up to \$50,000 in state funds toward a single project for community development. Applicants can apply for up to \$150,000 by submitting a letter of request to the DRS Director for approval. Additional project information will be required for applicants requesting over \$50,000. Please be advised that lesser project requests may have a greater chance of being funded as The Department of Rural Services strives to fund as many projects as possible.

Application Process

WHEN can we apply?

The deadline for fiscal year 2010 will be November 20, 2009. We will begin accepting applications for cycle one on September 1, 2009. There will be second cycle in the spring of 2010 with dates to be determined. If there are any funds left over from these two grant cycles, DRS will announce a third grant cycle to disperse the remaining funds. All applications must be received or postmarked by 4:30 p.m. on the day of the deadline or they will not be accepted. **Faxes of applications will not be accepted.**

SUBMITTING an Application

Applicants must gain the approval of their local governing body and the application must be **signed by the county judge or mayor who will be ultimately responsible for the grant** should it be received. If you are incorporated, you must apply through your mayor. If you are unincorporated, you must apply through the county judge. This process includes completion of the application form and presentation of it to the local council if applying through the city or quorum court if applying through the county. The local governing official (county judge or mayor) must affix his signature to the following documents for the application to be considered complete:

- certification letter
- resolution
- application (page 12)

GIF applications from Fiscal Year 2009 cannot be resubmitted. Applicants must submit an original application with original signatures plus **1 copy**.

Application Review and Awards Presentation

Applications are numbered and inspected for completeness and eligibility in the order received by the Department of Rural Services. Individual proposal consultations can be arranged with staff by appointment. Applicants are encouraged to submit applications well before the deadline to allow DRS staff time to thoroughly review the application and assist applicants in correcting any deficiencies prior to the deadline.

Applications received postmarked after the deadline date will not be eligible for consideration.

After staff review for completeness and eligibility, applications undergo a three step review process. Following final review and approval, grants are awarded by mail.

Documents Needed for a Complete Grant

In addition to the grant application with all questions answered fully, communities must include the following in order for the application to be complete:

- A signed Certification Letter, **enclosed with application**, from the local governing official (mayor for incorporated areas, county judge for unincorporated areas).
- A Resolution passed by the city council (for incorporated areas) or the quorum court (for unincorporated areas) **enclosed with application**. The Resolution must have the mayor/county judge's signature, and the signature of the city/county clerk.
- Backup documentation for ALL items listed in the project cost estimate. This includes written professional estimates for all items the applicant is purchasing or receiving through donation. Only one bid is required for each item.
- A deed, title, or other instrument showing proof of public ownership. This may include an intent to donate letter from a private individual or a lease that extends for more than 10 years. Public ownership includes ownership by public non-profit organizations. This requirement does not apply to requests for equipment purchases.
- Items of public support. **This means that you must have a letter of support from your State Senator AND State Representative**. These two letters are required, however, a community is welcome to include additional items of public support.

THINGS TO REMEMBER!!!!

- ❖ Use only paper clips or binder clips. Binding is unnecessary and will be removed.
- ❖ Type the application.
- ❖ Apply for only what is needed. Total project costs do not have to equal \$50,000.
- ❖ Put everything on the checklist in order and label all backup documentation clearly.
- ❖ Include documentation of public support from your State Senator **AND** State Representative.
- ❖ If a community has a RCGP (Rural Community Grant Program) or RSBG (Rural Services Block grant Program) open and the grant is in good standing, the community can still apply for GIF grant funds. However, a community can only apply for one GIF grant per cycle. If DRS receives more than one GIF grant application from a community, the local governing official will make the final decision on the project he/she deems to have higher priority prior to funding consideration.
- ❖ Countywide applications must show that the project will affect rural communities.
- ❖ An application for a project on land owned and operated solely by private organization is not eligible for funding. In order to be eligible, the land must be owned or have a lease agreement for more than 10 years with the non-profit, city, municipality, county, or fire department.
- ❖ Funds may not be used to reimburse any part of the project already purchased or constructed. **No part** of the grant project can be started until the community has received their grant check.



Questions about the grant program?
Not sure if your project is eligible?
Need to ask about the application process?
Give us a call toll-free at 1-888-RURAL-AR

Write us at:

101 East Capitol, Suite 202
Little Rock, AR 72201

Or e-mail us at:

Rural.Arkansas@arkansas.gov

Reporting Requirements and Responsibilities

In compliance with Act 1009, project funds will be expended through a fund established on the books of the city or county clerk. A copy of the original proposal and all project expenditures, with invoices attached, will be approved by the mayor or county judge and remain on file in the office of the mayor or county judge for three years or until audited, whichever is later.

All project expenditures must be completed within 18 months after the date of the award. A final report, including cancelled checks and receipts of all funds expended, along with the state's portion of any unspent funds, must be submitted by the mayor or county judge to DRS and subsequently to the Chief Fiscal Officer of the state. This must be done no more than 60 days following the project's completion or within the 18 month period of the grant award, whichever comes first.

If a community is unable to complete their project within the 18 month period, due to circumstances beyond their control, an extension may be granted. Communities should request an extension, in writing, via a letter to the DRS Director.

CHECKLIST FOR A COMPLETE GIF FUNDED COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT GRANT APPLICATION

In addition to the grant application, communities must include the following in order for the application to be complete. Failure to submit any of the required documents by the cycle deadline will result in an incomplete application and will not be reviewed by the Arkansas Rural Development Commission for grant consideration. Please use this sheet to double check that all required information is submitted.

- √ Signed Certification Letter (enclosed with application) from the local governing official (mayor for incorporated areas, county judge for unincorporated areas).
- √ Certification Letter has current calendar year date on it.
- √ Resolution passed by the city council (for incorporated areas) or the quorum court (for unincorporated areas) and signed by the mayor/county judge and the city/county clerk.
- √ Resolution is notarized by the local governing official and city/county clerk.
- √ Resolution is numbered and has current calendar year date on it.
- √ A deed, title, or other instrument showing proof of public ownership is included. This may include an intent to donate letter from a private individual or a lease that extends for more than 10 years. Public ownership is defined as owned or leased for more than 10 years with the non-profit, city, municipality, or county. This requirement does not apply to equipment purchases.
- √ Items of public input support included. This must include letters of support from the community's local governing State Senator and State Representative.
- √ Backup documentation for ALL items listed in the project cost estimate. This includes written professional estimates for all items the applicant is purchasing and letters of intent to donate all materials and labor being donated. Only one bid is required for each item.
- √ The original grant is mailed PLUS one copy.

Office Use Only

Control # _____

- Complete / Eligible
- Incomplete / Ineligible
- No Open Grants

GIF Funded Community Enhancement Grant Application

Community Name _____ County _____

Population _____ (must have estimate if unincorporated area)

State Senator _____ Senate District Number _____

State Representative _____ House District Number _____

Incorporated area? Yes No If yes, mayor's name _____

If no, county judge's name _____

If unincorporated area, name closest city or town and distance _____

Amount for which you are applying \$ _____

Amount to be provided by the community \$ _____

Total project cost \$ _____

What is the project for which you are applying? (Briefly describe)

Why is the project needed? Please include discussion of any emergencies or urgent needs.

Who was involved in the development of this proposal? (List individuals, local organizations, community groups, etc.)

Who will be the beneficiaries of this project and how will they benefit? List organizations and groups to use project and purpose.

What funding and other resources will be used to maintain and operate the project in the future?

Name the closest comparable facility and distance from this project.

Have you collaborated with any other funding sources to help pay for this project? Yes No
If so, please list the names and the collaboration efforts.

List other equipment, facilities, and other resources currently being used that are relevant to your application and what condition they are in.

COST ESTIMATE BREAKDOWN

Please itemize the cost estimate for the project below as much as possible. You may add extra sheets if necessary. Backup documentation for each line, including in-kind materials and labor, is required (professional estimates, catalog pages, letters of intent to donate, etc.)

<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$\$ _____

List the name, address, phone and fax numbers of two contact persons who are knowledgeable about the application. **The third column is for the local governing official.**

NOTE: The individual listed in column one will receive all correspondence regarding application status in addition to the county judge or mayor. Individuals in column two will only be contacted if DRS staff are unable to contact the individual in column one.

Contact Name	(1) _____	(2) _____	(3) _____
Title	(1) _____	(2) _____	(3) _____
Address	(1) _____	(2) _____	(3) _____
City, State, Zip	(1) _____	(2) _____	(3) _____
Day Phone	(1) _____	(2) _____	(3) _____
Evening Phone	(1) _____	(2) _____	(3) _____
Fax	(1) _____	(2) _____	(3) _____
Email Address	(1) _____	(2) _____	(3) _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION NEEDED SHOULD THIS APPLICATION BE CHOSEN FOR FUNDING

Local Newspapers:	(1) _____	(2) _____
Address:	(1) _____	(2) _____
City / State / Zip:	(1) _____	(2) _____

With my signature below, I do hereby certify that I have read, understand, and support the above application for grant funds through the GIF Funded Community Enhancement Grant. I further certify that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the rules and regulations governing the grant programs.

Signature of County Judge/Mayor / Date Signed

Signature of Contact Person / Date Signed

Signature of Contact Person / Date Signed

Please carefully review the application and be sure that you have completely answered every question. This document must be postmarked with all backup documentation required no later than 4:30 p.m. on the application deadline. The Department of Rural Services must receive an original copy along with 1 copy. FAXES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Please mail applications to:

GIF Funded Community Enhancement Grant
101 East Capitol, Suite 202
Little Rock, AR 72201

CERTIFICATION LETTER

Date _____

GIF Funded Community Enhancement Grant
c/o Department of Rural Services
101 East Capitol, Suite 202
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Members of the Arkansas Rural Development Commission:

On behalf of the city/community of _____, I am writing to request your assistance in securing a state grant under the GIF Funded Community Enhancement Grant. Proceeds from the \$_____ grant, if awarded, will be used for the following project, as outlined in the enclosed application:

I designate myself, Mayor/County Judge of _____ as the person ultimately responsible for the administration of the state grant, if awarded. Project funds from all sources will be expended through a fund established on the books of the city/county of _____, and all project expenditures with invoices and cancelled checks attached, in addition to copies of all application materials, will remain on file in the Mayor/County Judge's office for three years or until audited (whichever is later), to assure that funds were used for the purposes for which they were made available.

If additional information is needed concerning this project, please feel free to contact me or the project's primary contact person (name) _____ at (phone number) _____.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mayor _____ County Judge _____

City _____ County _____

Phone Number _____ Phone Number _____

RESOLUTION PASSED BY CITY COUNCIL/QUORUM COURT

Note: This is a sample copy of a resolution intended to assist grant writers in knowing what to submit. All Resolutions must be notarized by the local governing official.

RESOLUTION # _____

Be it resolved by the City Council/Quorum Court of _____, State of Arkansas a resolution entitled: _____.

A Resolution authorizing the Mayor of _____ Town or the County Judge of _____ County to apply for a grant of behalf of the _____ Community.

Whereas, the _____ City Council/Quorum Court has determined that the _____ Community meets eligibility requirements necessary to apply for a grant under the GIF Funded Community Enhancement Grant; and

Whereas, the _____ Community has presented plans to (description of project) _____

_____ ; and

Whereas, the City Council/Quorum Court of _____ recognizes the need for the project, concurs its importance, and supports the _____ Community in its efforts to proceed with the same; and

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Mayor/County Judge of _____ is hereby authorized to submit an application of formal request to the Arkansas Rural Development Commission for purposes of securing state grant funds in the amount of \$ _____ to aid and assist the _____ Community in executing the proposed project described herein and that the Mayor/County Judge or Recorder/Treasurer of _____ is further authorized to administer the grant funds for the same project.

THIS RESOLUTION ADOPTED IN REGULAR SESSION _____
Date

APPROVED: _____
Signature of Mayor or County Judge

Typed name of Mayor or County Judge

ATTEST: _____
Signature of City or County Clerk