



**COMPETITIVE GRANT
PROGRAMS:**

- Building for the Arts ■
- Building Communities Fund ■
- Youth Recreational Facilities ■

2023-2025 Building Communities Fund (BCF) Grant Guidelines

Capital grants for nonresidential community and social service projects.

There is no minimum or maximum grant award amount.
Small and rural projects are encouraged to apply!

Awards between 25% and 100% state funds of eligible project costs.

Application Deadline: Thursday, August 5, 2022 at 5 p.m.

Grant application workshops: **June 15, 2022 10:00 a.m.**
Please RSVP at [BCF Workshop](#).

- For program questions about the BCF grant please contact Caprograms@commerce.wa.gov or call 360-725-3075.
- For technical assistance with the ZoomGrants application please contact Questions@ZoomGrants.com or call 866-323-5404 x2

Community Capital Facilities Programs

P.O. Box 42525

Olympia, WA 98504-2525

(360) 725-3075

caprograms@commerce.wa.gov

ONLINE APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications for the 2023-2025 round will be submitted electronically through ZoomGrants. Hardcopies will not be accepted. Applications must be submitted to Commerce no later than 5:00pm on Thursday, August 5, 2022.

Click [HERE](#) to reach the ZoomGrants website. If you have a ZoomGrants account, log in and follow the instructions. If you are a new user, complete the required information for a new ZoomGrants account to create a profile. Please do not use “The” as the first word in the agency name. Once the agency profile has been created, select the BCF Grant, click the “Apply” button and start your proposal. Answers are automatically saved.

TAB 1: SUMMARY

This section includes basic information concerning your organization and proposal, including contact information and other pertinent data. This section must be completed in its entirety.

TAB 2: ELIGIBILITY TEST

All applicants must first answer and submit the Eligibility Test questions. This section will then need to be approved by Commerce. If approved, you will then be allowed to continue to the next tab.

TAB 3: APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Please answer thoroughly and to the best of your ability. Provide cross streets if there is no project address, the parcel number(s) of the project site, and if land will be re-parcelled.

TAB 4: BUDGET

When listing your project budget, ***please use eligible costs only***. This will be different from your ***total*** project budget, and includes only capital costs that this grant can reimburse. For more information about what costs are eligible, please refer to Page 12.

TAB 5: TABLES

In this tab you will input your organization’s financials for FY 2018-2022 (est) along with your project timeline.

TAB 6: DOCUMENTS

The Documents tab of the application is where you will upload the documents required or requested for the application. Please save forms or documents on your computer, complete and then upload to ZoomGrants using the “Upload” button provided. All documents required for your project must be completed and submitted with the application.

Failure to provide the requested documentation or providing inaccurate information may result in the proposal receiving less points or being disqualified.

2023-2025 Building Community Fund Policy Highlights

Community Service Objective

A single-focused applicant can qualify for funding consideration by demonstrating that a proposed project will offer three or more distinct activities that meet a single community service objective, e.g., a food bank providing (1) food for the needy (2) food program outreach and (3) nutritional education.

Review Process

The Building Communities Fund (BCF) Advisory Board will solicit, evaluate and rank applications.

Acquisition Projects

All acquisition projects must provide a current (one year) appraisal or County Assessment of the site to be purchased.

Collateral Requirements

All capital projects for construction, acquisition and renovation that involve the expenditure of \$250,000 or more in state funds must list the Department of Commerce on the deed of trust or leasehold deed of trust and provide title insurance. The deed of trust or leasehold deed of trust in favor of Commerce must be recorded before reimbursement of project costs.

Reimbursement/Billing Procedures

All capital project reimbursements shall be evidenced by documentation showing the cost has already been incurred by the grantee. The Grantee shall provide copies of the cancelled check or electronic funds transfer (as applicable) confirming payment of each expenditure for the amount of each invoice claimed.

LEED Requirements

All projects other than acquisition are required to apply for LEED Silver certification. However, renovation projects that involve a new addition to an existing building may require LEED certification as well. New construction projects under 5,000 square feet are exempt from this requirement.

DAHP Compliance Under Governor's Executive Order 21-02

All capital projects must be reviewed by the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) and area Tribes.

Your project's scope of work cannot be significantly changed

If you apply for and receive a construction grant you cannot change this to an acquisition grant. This is one of a number of reasons why you may consider waiting until the next grant funding cycle (2025-2027 biennium) if your project is currently at an early stage of development.

SIX STEPS TO GETTING A GRANT

The Department of Commerce stands as an ally in the support of, and encouragement of, the continuing statewide effort to promote Diversity Equity and Inclusion measures to include the support of BIPOC and By-and-For organizations in the pursuit of competitive grants.

STEP 1: *Decide whether you are eligible — and get ready to apply*

This is a highly competitive grant program, so before submitting your grant application we strongly encourage you do your homework. Take a look at our timeline for awarding funds to make sure that it fits with your cash-flow needs.

STEP 2: *Decide whether to seek LEED certification or an exemption*

If you wish to apply for an exemption you can do so at any point between now and when grant applications are due. If you apply for an exemption soon, you can find out whether your request is accepted before deciding whether to prepare a grant application.

STEP 3: *Complete your application online*

The BCF Grant Application is now available online! To apply, please follow the ZoomGrants link [here](#).

STEP 4: *Application Review*

Applicants whose projects make it past a preliminary staff review will be reviewed by the BCF Advisory Board. Grants that are approved by the Board will be forwarded to the Governor and State Legislature for final funding approval.

STEP 5: *Negotiate a contract*

If the advisory board recommends your project for funding and it is included in the 2023-2025 Capital Budget and signed into law, Community Capital Facilities will draft a contract with your organization before disbursing the funds. See Page 11 for contracting requirements— some of which you should start thinking about now.

STEP 6: *Submit reimbursement materials*

This is a reimbursement-style grant. That means no advance payments, but we've worked hard to make the paperwork straightforward. Funds will likely become available by Fall of 2023.

This publication is available in an alternative format upon request. Events sponsored by Commerce are accessible to persons with disabilities. Accommodations may be arranged with a minimum of 10 working days notice by calling (360)725-3075 or emailing caprograms@commerce.wa.gov

We have a strong commitment to supporting smaller facilities and those serving rural parts of the state. If you aren't sure about whether to apply for a BCF grant, don't feel shy about talking to us. We're here to help you succeed!

PART 1: PROGRAM BACKGROUND AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Background

The 2008 Legislature enacted the Building Communities Fund (BCF) to provide a means of identifying qualified community and social service capital projects, and providing capital support to nonprofit agencies, Tribes and their partners to develop or improve these facilities.

These investments play a key role in improving the economic, social, and educational climate in distressed communities.

1.1 Program purpose

This program awards state grants to Tribes and nonprofit community-based organizations to defray eligible capital costs to acquire, construct, or rehabilitate nonresidential community service centers. Eligible project costs will be reimbursed as follows:

- For project budgets:
 - Up to \$100,000—100%;
 - \$100,000—\$250,000—75%
 - \$250,000—\$500,000—50%
 - Over \$500,000—25%

Under exceptional circumstances the state share of project costs may exceed these amounts. There is no minimum or maximum grant award amount.

1.2 Applicant eligibility

All applicants must meet the following eligibility standards *at the time the application is submitted*:

- Be a Tribe or registered in the state of Washington as a nonprofit organization;
- Have a legally constituted board of directors;
- Agree to enter the LEED certification process or receive an exemption

from Commerce;

- Agree to pay state prevailing wages as of the date the budget becomes effective;

- Have control of the project site via ownership or executed long-term lease (15 years) at the time of application - operating agreements are discouraged, but will be evaluated independently;

- Have made substantial progress in an active capital fundraising campaign dedicated to the project; and

- **Projects that are complete or do not need state funds to be complete are ineligible.**

1.3 Eligible projects

A proposed project must:

- Be a nonresidential facility;
- Consist of acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of a facility used to deliver services (social service and multipurpose community centers) including those serving BIPOC communities; and

- Be located in a “distressed community” **or** serve a substantial number of low-income or disadvantaged persons.

A distressed community is defined as:

- A county that has an unemployment rate that is 20 percent above the state average for the immediate previous three years; **OR**

- An area within a county designated as “eligible” under the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Community Development Financial Institutions Fund’s [New Markets Tax Credit](#) program; **OR**

- A school district in which at least 50 percent of local elementary students receive free and reduced-price

meals.

To qualify as serving “a substantial number of low-income or disadvantaged persons” applicants must demonstrate that at least 40 percent of service recipients are at or below 200 percent of the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services [Poverty Level Guidelines](#) or qualify as “disadvantaged” as outlined by the federal Small Business Administration’s Individual Determinations of [Social and Economic Disadvantage](#).

To qualify, applicants must also demonstrate that the project meets ALL 10 of the following benchmarks:

- I. Will increase the range, efficiency, or quality of the services provided;
- II. Will be located in a distressed community or serve a substantial number of low-income or disadvantaged persons;
- III. Will offer a diverse set of on-site activities that meet multiple community service objectives;
- IV. Reflects a long-term vision for the development of the community, shared by residents, businesses, leaders, and partners;
- V. Requires state funding to accomplish a discrete, usable phase of the

project. **By statute, if your organization has raised 100% of the project budget, or it is already under construction at the time application, it is not eligible for a BCF grant;**

VI. Is ready to proceed and will make timely use of the funds;

VII. Is sponsored by one or more entities that have the organizational and financial capacity to fulfill the terms of the grant agreement and to maintain the project into the future;

VIII. Fills an unmet need for community services;

IX. Will achieve its stated objectives; **AND**

X. Is a community priority as shown through tangible commitments of existing or future assets made to the project by community residents, leaders, businesses, and government partners.

1.4 Partnerships

Applicants must be a Tribe or non-profit registered in the state of Washington. Other nonprofits, local jurisdictions, or Tribes may partner with the applicant, but the applicant must be the primary beneficiary and exercise substantial control over the facility’s management.

Community Capital Facilities

Department of Commerce

Mailing / street address:

P.O. Box 42525
1011 Plum Street SW
Olympia, WA 98504-2525
Phone: (360)725-3075

E-mail:

capprograms@commerce.wa.gov

STAFF:

Addie Craig

Managing Director

(360) 688-0041

Addeline.Craig@commerce.wa.gov

Michael Kendall

Capital Programs Manager

(360) 764-3326

Mike.Kendall@commerce.wa.gov

Beth Robinson

Program Supervisor

(360) 549-6260

Beth.Robinson@commerce.wa.gov

Keith Yates—BCF

Program Manager

(360) 725-2952

Keith.Yates@commerce.wa.gov

COMMERCE LEADERSHIP:

Lisa Brown

Director

Mark K. Barkley

Assistant Director

Tony Hanson

Deputy Assistant Director

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All partnerships must provide a copy of an executed joint-operating agreement that:

- Lasts a minimum of 15 years;
- Is executed at the time of application;
- Establishes the applicant as possessing substantial authority to manage the facility and its services; and,
- Contains a contingency plan to address the possibility of dissolution or other change of ownership.

Nonprofit-public partnerships will be assessed for whether their project will benefit the community at large rather than the participating public agency's clients or students. These partnerships must also demonstrate financial need.

1.5 LLCs and nonprofits

The applicant's facility may be owned by a limited liability corporation (LLC) for operational purposes or tax credit purposes so long as the nonprofit is the managing member and has a controlling interest in the LLC through the duration of the grant commitment period.

The applicant must be able to provide evidence of the LLC ownership, controlling interest, signing authority and the managing members at the time of application, usually in the form of an Operating Agreement. A corporate resolution may be required prior to execution of the grant if the award is made to applicant.

The LLC must also be licensed through the Secretary of State of Washington and the Washington State Department of Revenue.

1.6 Mixed-use facilities

A facility that is part of a larger, mixed-use project (such as retail or condominium space) may be eligible for funding. However, this grant can only fund the capital costs of the eligible project space.

1.7 Multiple applications

Organizations with multiple facilities can apply for up to three BCF grants each cycle. Note, however, that each application must be separate and distinct, including separate budgets and sources of funds. All required forms must also be current.

1.8 "Exceptional Circumstances"

The state's contribution may exceed the reimbursement percentage defined in Section 1.1. These include projects affected by natural disasters, emergencies beyond an applicant's control, such as a fire or an unanticipated loss of a lease where services are currently provided, a delay that could result in a threat to public health and/or safety, and instances where a local community could quantifiably demonstrate that they had exhausted all possible fundraising efforts.

1.9 LEED exemptions

All applicants are required to enter the LEED certification process and obtain Silver status, or get an exemption from Commerce staff. You may submit a LEED Certification Declaration asking for an exemption before applying for a grant or as part of your application. See Section 1.10 on Page 8 for more information.

1.10 High-performance buildings law

The 2005 Washington State Legislature passed a law that requires many of our competitive grant recipients to comply with what has been termed “high-performance” or “green” building standards ([RCW 39.35D](#)).

The legislation’s goal is for major capital facilities projects receiving state dollars to be built to the LEED silver standard where “practicable.” LEED (which stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a certification program run by the U.S. Green Building Council.

These building principles offer the most savings when incorporated early in the design process. That’s why *we strongly encourage you to talk with your architect as soon as possible.*

The first issue you may wish to explore is whether your project is required to meet the LEED silver standard. The law offers two types of exemptions.

Exemption 1: Facility types

The following types of facilities are exempt:

- Acquisition only, does not include construction or renovation;

- New construction less than 5,000 gross square feet of occupied or conditioned space as defined by the State Energy Code;

- Renovation projects whose costs are less than 50 percent of the facility’s assessed value *and* are less than 5,000 gross square feet of occupied or conditioned space; or

- Facilities such as hospitals; research facilities primarily used for laboratory experimentation, research, or training in research methods; or similar building types.

Exemption 2: “Not practicable”

Renovation projects that involve a new addition to an existing building may not be required for LEED Certification. We are not permitted to offer this exemption because of cost or timing-related issues.

Pre-application exemption requests

You don’t need to wait until you turn in a grant application to find out if your project will be exempted. Our website has a LEED Declaration form that you and/or your architect fill out. You can find that form in the “Documents” tab of the BCF online application.

According to the American Institute of Architects, high-performance buildings are cheaper to operate, save water and energy, and improve worker performance.

PART 2: THE REVIEW PROCESS

2.1 Application submissions

Applications must be received by **Thursday, August 5, 2022** at 5p.m. *Note that applications received by mail or fax will not be accepted.*

2.2 Preliminary review

After the submittal deadline, staff will review applications for eligibility and completeness. Those that are incomplete or do not meet eligibility standards **will not** be forwarded to the BCF Advisory Board for review.

2.3 Applicant notification

After the preliminary review, each applicant will receive notification from Community Capital Facilities as to whether their project has been forwarded to the BCF Advisory Board.

Those whose projects are not forwarded to the BCF Advisory Board will be informed of the reasons in writing, and are encouraged to discuss with our staff how to prepare a more competitive

grant for a future funding cycle.

2.4 Advisory Board role

The BCF Advisory Board helps develop program policy, reviews applications, and recommends projects for funding. The Board consists of volunteers with demonstrated expertise in funding, administering, or advocating for social service organizations.

2.5 Board work session

The Advisory Board will convene in September, 2022 to review applications. The Board will review project applications and develop a ranked list of qualified eligible projects.

2.6 Board testimony

Time allowing, applicants may be given time to offer testimony about their proposals and answer questions from Board members.

Commerce reserves the right to reject applications that are unclear or provide incomplete information.

2023-2025 BCF GRANT DATES	
BCF grant application workshops	June 15, 2022 10:00a.m.
Applications due	August 5, 2022
Notification of preliminary review results	September, 2022
BCF Advisory Board work session	September, 2022
Recommendations forwarded to Governor and Legislature	September, 2022
Governor releases proposed capital budget	December, 2022 (estimated)
2023-2025 Capital Budget signed into law	May, 2023 (estimated)
Community Capital Facilities may begin disbursing funds	September, 2023 (estimated)
Expiration of funds without legislative action	June 30, 2025

Construction management does not include work performed by internal / administrative project managers.

2.7 Appropriations process

The Board will forward its recommendations, in the form of a prioritized list of projects to the Director of Commerce in the Fall of 2022. If approved by the Director, the list will be included in the agency’s 2023-2025 Capital Budget request, which is submitted to the Governor’s budget office. If approved by the Governor, the list will be included in their 2023-2025 Capital Budget request.

The 2023 Legislature will make the final determination as to which projects, if any, receive BCF grants, the level at which they are funded, and the total amount of funds to be provided for the 2023-2025 biennium. The Governor must sign the Capital Budget before an appropriation is legally binding.

2.8 Appeals

The Board’s decisions are final and cannot be appealed. However, staff would be happy to provide feedback on how to develop an more competitive application for a future funding cycle.

2.9 Misrepresentation

Any organization that presents false or misleading information in their application will be disqualified.

3.1 Funding restrictions

Funds awarded under this program originate from the sale of state capital bonds, and include no federal funds.

We strive to administer funds expediently and with a minimum of red tape. We do so within the policies and procedures established by the Legislature, the state Office of Financial Management, the Treasurer and the Office of the Attorney General.

BCF awards are funded through an appropriation in the state Capital Budget. **A grant can only be spent by the designated organization for costs that fit the scope of work listed in the grant application.** The application becomes a controlling document that guides how a grant can be spent.

3.2 Cost reimbursement

Capital Budget funds are available on a reimbursement basis only. Reimbursable costs are those that a grantee has already incurred.

We may reimburse grant recipients for costs incurred prior to the date a contract is executed, and as far back as July 1, 2020. The project start date must be accurately stated in the application in order for us to do so.

Grants are subject to an administrative fee

Community Capital Facilities is authorized to retain 3 percent from each award to cover all administration costs. For the 2021-2023 Biennium, Commerce retained 3 percent from competitive grants such as those offered by the BCF program. **Keep this in mind as you develop your project budget.**

PART 3: CONTRACTING SPECIFICS

3.3 Matching funds

BCF grants may be used to pay a percentage of *eligible* project costs, documented by invoices, as follows:

For project budgets:

- Up to \$100,000—100%
- \$100,000—\$250,000—75%
- \$250,000—\$500,000—50%
- Over \$500,000—25%

BCF cannot match other state grants. This is why those funds cannot be included in your grant application’s funding sources.

Non-state matching funds may consist of cash on hand, documented pledge commitments, the value of land acquired for the project, and in-kind contributions when properly documented.

Grantees may also include the proceeds of a letter of credit or other binding loan commitments as part of their non-state matching funds. The value of land used as non-state match must be supported by a current appraisal (within one year of application due date) performed by a certified professional appraiser or a county assessment.

3.4 Availability of funds

Funds are expected to be available in September of 2023, but that can vary depending upon factors such as when the state budget is approved. Also, a contract cannot be written until the grantee has met all funding conditions.

Contracts generally take four to five weeks to execute once the grantee provides us with all needed information. Contracts are developed on a first-come, first-served basis.

3.5 Contracting conditions

The following requirements must be met before grantees can begin drawing down their grant funds.

- Grantees must demonstrate in writing the financial capability to complete the project. This means that the entire amount of non-state matching funds must be committed to the project.

- Grantees must provide written evidence of site control **by the application deadline**, either through outright ownership of the subject property or an executed long-term lease (at least 15 years). Operating agreements are discouraged, but will be evaluated independently.

- Grantees must provide Commerce with a deed of trust or leasehold deed of trust as security for the grant and it must be recorded before reimbursement of project costs. Contracts under \$250,000 are exempt from this requirement.

3.6 Documenting expenses

We reimburse grantees only after receiving copies of the original billing documents (invoices) and copies of cancelled checks or electronic funds transfer, as applicable. In all cases, costs must be documented and auditable.

3.7 Prevailing-wage law

Construction projects that receive any of our grants are required to pay state prevailing wages as of the date the Capital Budget becomes effective.

The Department of Labor and Industries is the state agency that implements prevailing wage law. For more information, contact Labor and Industries at pw1@lni.wa.gov.

This is a reimbursement style grant, and you can start drawing down funds only after all other money needed to complete the project has been raised. Once you have met this requirement, you can receive reimbursement for any eligible costs incurred and paid as far back as July 1, 2020.

For more information about how to determine your eligible project budget and how much you can apply for please see the following page.

3.8 Reappropriations

Some grant recipients may not be able to expend all of their funds by the end of the 2023-2025 biennium (June 30, 2025). Any unexpended funds will lapse on that date unless reappropriated.

Although not legally obligated to do so, the Legislature generally reappropriates unspent funds for competitive capital projects such as those funded through BCF, but traditionally only one additional biennium.

3.9 Change of ownership

Most of the capital projects constructed with state funds require that the facility or project be held by the grantee for a period of time appropriate to the amount of the state grant (a minimum of 10 years from the final payment date) and that the facility or project be used for the same purpose expressed in the application.

3.10 Loan pay downs/payoffs

BCF can assist in paying down or paying off a construction or bridge loan that was incurred on or after July 1, 2020 as part of the project, **but only as part of the reimbursement process.** Eligible invoices will be reimbursed, and the funds can then be used as the grantee sees fit. **BCF grants cannot be used to directly refinance debt, e.g., to pay down a mortgage, regardless of when it was incurred.**

3.11 Eligible costs

Capital Budget funds may generally be used to pay for the following construction-related expenses, incurred as far back as July 1, 2020:

- design, architectural, and engineering work;
- building permits/fees;
- archaeological/historical review;
- construction labor and materials;

3.12 Ineligible costs

Our grants are intended to fund bricks and mortar. The following costs are not eligible for reimbursement and *cannot be used to match state funds*:

- any internal operating costs;
- project management (from internal sources);
- fundraising activities;
- feasibility studies;
- computers or office equipment;
- rolling stock (such as vehicles);
- lease payments for rental of equipment or facilities;
- mortgages and property leases (including long-term);
- the moving of equipment, furniture, etc., between facilities; and
- painting and other regular maintenance costs.

BCF funds also cannot be used to reimburse grantees for the value of discounted purchase and sale agreements.

*** Construction management and observation** is on-site management and/or supervision of the work site and workers thereon. This is an eligible project cost. Construction management does **not** include work typically performed by off-site consultants or consultant organizations, grant writers, project managers, or employees of the grantee, unless the employee is hired solely and specifically to perform on-site construction management as defined above.

**** Furnishings and equipment** are considered eligible project costs as long as the average useful life of the item purchased is 13 years or more. These would be listed under the Capitalized Equipment line item.

***** Costs directly associated with property acquisition** include appraisal fees, title opinions, surveying fees, real estate fees, title transfer taxes, easements of record, and legal expenses.

How should in-kind donations be handled?

You may apply in-kind donations toward your match requirement. Eligible donations include, labor (except when donated by an applicant's paid staff), materials, or equipment as long as their value can be properly assessed and documented.

We treat in-kind professional and nonprofessional labor differently. Professional labor is calculated at the rate a volunteer would normally charge for his or her services (be sure to document these costs with invoices). Nonprofessional labor is calculated at \$15 per hour. This can be documented with a memo itemizing the type of work done and number of hours worked by your volunteers.

BCF funds cannot, however, be used to reimburse grantees for the value of discounted purchase and sale agreements. Only real estate costs incurred **and paid** by the grantee are eligible for reimbursement.

Also, the BCF Board is wary of projects too dependent on in-kind donations, particularly if they are heavily leveraged with loans. This is why the amount of nonprofessional, in-kind labor you can receive credit for in our formula points is capped at 10 percent of project costs.

In general, reviewers look for evidence that an applicant has the ability to raise the funds needed to complete the project and cover its ongoing costs of operation.

State (as opposed to federal) prevailing wages are required of all construction projects as of the date the budget becomes effective.

How do I determine how much I can apply for?

The amount that BCF can award your project has changed from previous years. (see Section 1.1, Page 5). First, you need an accurate Eligible Project Budget. **If you do receive a grant it cannot be changed if your budget increases.** This is why it is important to be far enough along in your project to be able to accurately determine what that budget is.

An Eligible Project Budget includes everything that it takes to construct or renovate your project, minus any ineligible costs, such as operating costs, feasibility studies, etc. There is a detailed description of eligible and ineligible costs in Sections 3.11 and 3.12 on Page 12.

Once you have determined your Eligible Project Budget, what you can apply for depends on the size of your budget:

- **Projects up to \$100,000 may apply for 100% of that budget amount;**
- **Projects between \$100,000-\$250,000 may apply for 75%;**
- **Projects between \$250,000-\$500,000 may apply for 50%;**
- **Projects over \$500,000 may apply for 25% of that budget amount;**

If you need assistance with calculating this amount or have any other questions regarding your grant application please contact staff. Thank you!