



American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding for Small Business Organizations

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) Program of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) is intended to provide a substantial infusion of resources to State and Local governments to help address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, respond to the economic ramifications, and lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery.

The City of La Crosse has allocated \$100,000 specifically for organizations located in the City of La Crosse addressing small business pandemic response needs and/or building a stronger and more equitable small business community.

Purpose of this Award

The City of La Crosse is seeking proposals that fit the criteria for State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Program of the American Rescue Plan Act grant for assistance to small businesses, specifically requests that provide technical assistance, counseling, or other services to support business planning; business incubators and start-up or expansion assistance; and enhanced support to microbusinesses.

Organization, Award and Reporting Requirements

- Applicant organization must have a brick-and-mortar physical presence and/or office in the City of La Crosse and largely serve small businesses in the city
- Applicant organization must have no outstanding municipal obligations to the city (i.e. property taxes, past due bills, etc.)
- Applicant organizations must be able to comply with federal reporting guidelines, including but not limited to submitting quarterly project and expenditure reports. At a minimum, all awardees will be required to provide annual grant reports.

Eligible Use of Funds and Additional Requirements

Project Requirements (in addition to those listed on page 1)

Awardees will function as a subrecipient of the City to carry out an eligible use of the Federal SLFRF program – resulting in the following project requirements:

- Applicant must have a Unique Entity Identifier number and be registering at sam.gov.
- If applicant’s project proposal is to provide technical assistance, counseling, or other services to support business planning, then applicant must identify small businesses impacted by the pandemic by one or more of the following ways:
 - Decreased revenue or gross receipts
 - Financial insecurity
 - Increased costs
 - Capacity to weather financial hardship
 - Challenges covering payroll, rent or mortgage, and other operating costs
 - Small businesses located in a [Qualified Census Tract](#) (QCT)
- If applicant’s project proposal is to provide support to business incubators, start-up or expansion assistance, and/or enhanced support to microbusinesses, then applicant must identify small businesses impacted by the pandemic by the following ways:
 - Small businesses supported by the project/program proposed are located in a [Qualified Census Tract](#) (QCT)
- All funding requests must be for expenses incurred **after** May 1, 2024 and can cover up to two years of support, with a final completion deadline of June 30, 2026.

Preferences

- New projects or strategic expansion of existing projects
- Evidence-based projects with context of how the project is proven to lead to a stronger and more equitable small business community

Application Timeline

Planned Timeline for RFP Process

RFP announced:	Mar 1, 2024
Proposals due:	April 4, 2024
Awards announced:	April 25, 2024
Project period begins:	May 1, 2024

Applying for a Grant

Proposal Deadline

Proposals are due by 4PM April 4, 2024. No late proposals will be accepted.

RFP Contact Information:

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Review and Evaluation Process

With support from City staff, the Economic and Community Development Commission will determine grant awards.

Proposal Requirements

Each proposal submission must include the following:

- General Information and Proposal Overview
 - Primary Contact Information
 - Brief synopsis of the Project to be supported/Purpose of the Request (1-2 sentences)
 - Anticipated number of businesses served
 - Qualified Census Tracts served and/or other ARPA eligibility requirements being met
 - Project Start and End date
 - Total Project Cost and Amount Requested
- Request Details
 - Statement of Need
 - Proposed Work/Project
 - Impact
 - Partners/Collaborators
 - Organizational Fit
- Project Evaluation
 - Goals and Objectives
 - Evaluation
- Project Budget
 - Detailed Budget
 - Narrative
 - Sustainability
- Supporting Documents
 - Letters of Support (optional)

Scoring Criteria

Below are areas to be scored.

- Community Need - Proposal addresses a significant, critical, localized and timely need.
- ARPA Project Strength – Proposal meets ARPA eligibility criteria and aligns well with the intent of ARPA funding.
- Strategy/Feasibility - Proposal has clear goals and presents a solid strategy for achieving anticipated goals.
- Impact – Project will have a significant impact on the small business/targeted community.
- Partners/Collaboration - The applicant has considered who else to involve in their proposed project to improve effectiveness and/or eliminate duplication of service.

- Organizational Fit – Project/program fits within the applicant’s mission.
- Evaluation - Clear measures to prove effectiveness (outcomes/results) are identified, and the plans on how data will be collected to track those results is clear and realistic.
- Budget - All project expenses and other revenue sources are included and are realistic considering audience size and stated goals.
- Sustainability - There is a plan for project/program sustainability post support.
- Organizational Health - Organization’s caliber of services and leadership is high.
- Funding Opinion – Project/program should be a priority for the City to fund.

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