

MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT
Office of Grants Management
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

FY25 Emerging Business Improvement Districts Grants (EBID) Program

Program Summary: The Community Engagement Cluster and the Office of Grants Management are soliciting grant applications under the County's FY 2025 Emerging Business Districts Grants Program, which aims to establish Business Improvement Districts or Urban District Corporations within Montgomery County by subsidizing the formation and support of non-profit commercial district management entities to conduct place making, place management, branding, and economic development activities in a designated neighborhood. A total of \$414,600 will be made available to fund awards between \$100,000 and \$300,000 for up to 12 months. Applicants may submit multi-year funding proposals for up to three years but funding beyond the first 12 months will be contingent on both satisfactory project performance and availability of funding. Montgomery County Government will hold a virtual Information Session on the date indicated below to allow eligible and interested applicants the chance to ask questions about the solicitation and receive guidance on how to complete the application form.

Key Program Dates:

- **Program Opens for Applications:** Thursday, April 17, 2025 12:00 PM
- **MS Teams Live Online Grant Program Information Session:** Monday, April 21, 2025, from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM (see link below)
- **Submission Deadline:** Thursday, May 15, 2025, at 11:59 PM

Key Program Resources:

- **Program Page:** https://gn.ecivis.com/GO/gn_redir/T/qt9me8govewm
- **Information Session:** [Link to the FY25 EBID Information Session on Monday, April 21, 2025, from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM \(join the event live or view the recording\)](#)
- [**OGM Board Race-Ethnicity Reporting Template**](#)

Grant Program Details, Submissions, and Support: Application details can be downloaded, and application may be submitted through the Online Grants Application Platform through the links above. Applicants requiring an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation should contact OGM to discuss alternative submission options. Applications that are incomplete, do not meet legal requirements, or are submitted after the deadline will not be accepted. For alternate ADA submission options please contact the Office of Grants Management using the contact information below:

Office of Grants Management
grants@montgomerycountymd.gov

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SECTION I – GRANT PROGRAM INFORMATION

A. Background

The Community Engagement Cluster and the Office of Grants Management are soliciting grant applications for the County's FY 2025 Emerging Business Districts Grants Program, which aims to establish Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) or Urban District Corporations (UDCs) within Montgomery County by subsidizing the formation of and providing support to nonprofit commercial district management entities to conduct place making, place management, branding, and economic development activities in a designated neighborhood.

A BID is an economic development tool that allows a geographic cluster of commercial property owners to collectively invest in activities that improve economic vitality. These activities enhance—rather than replace—city services, and may range from safety and sanitation, to placemaking and branding, to business attraction and even real estate development. BIDs serve as both a management structure and a dedicated funding source for property owners interested in these services, as a BID distinctively has the authority to legally compel a tax assessment on all properties located within its geographic boundaries.

A UDC is defined in Montgomery County Code as a special taxing district that provides an administrative and financial framework to accomplish the following goals for intensely developed communities containing diversified commercial, institutional, and residential development: (1) increasing the maintenance of the streetscape and its amenities; (2) providing additional public amenities such as plantings, seating, shelters, and works of art; (3) promoting the commercial and residential interests of these areas; and (4) programming cultural and community activities.

Both BIDs and UDCs are created through the adoption of a local law. Presently, there are two UDCs (Bethesda and Friendship Heights) and no BIDs in Montgomery County.

Additional information about BIDs and UDCs may be found here:

- [Office of Legislative Oversight Report 2015-7: Case Studies of Local Business and Community Districts](#)
- [Prince George's County Business Improvement District Toolkit](#)
- [Code of Maryland, Economic Development, § 12-601 through § 12-612](#)
- [Montgomery County Code Section 68A. Montgomery County Urban Districts](#)

The BID and UDC establishment process can roughly be divided into three phases to be completed over an estimated period of three years: (1) planning, (2) outreach, and (3) legislative approval. While the long-term goal of this program is to support the establishment of BIDs and UDCs, selected awardees are anticipated to be at various points along the continuum of the three phases. The support provided under this grants program aims to help applicants advance through these phases.

B. Target Population

The direct target population for this Grants Program are organizations that are working towards becoming a BID or UDC. The indirect target populations are businesses, organizations, and residents of Montgomery County benefitting from their work.

C. Funding Priorities

Montgomery County Government will prioritize awards to organizations that demonstrate the following in their applications:

- Efforts towards becoming an independent BID or UDC
- Broad-based community support for the commercial district revitalization process, with strong support from both the public and private sectors or a plan for obtaining the needed community support
- Vision and mission statements relevant to community condition and equity principles
- Clear and measurable milestones
- Cultural proficiency
- Inclusivity of the LGBTQIA+ community members
- Application of a racial equity lens

D. Eligible Organizations

Applicants must meet the following **Grant Program Eligibility Conditions**:

- The organization must have a Federal 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status or be a collaboration between two or more entities with at least one having this status. MCG will accept applications from 501(c)(6) commercial nonprofits, such as chambers of commerce.

Montgomery County Eligibility Conditions:

- The organization must be currently registered and in Good Standing with the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT);
- All activities and expenditures under this grant program must be provided in Montgomery County OR be exclusively for Montgomery County residents if activities and expenditures occur outside of the County;
- Current Montgomery County contract or grant award winners must be current on all reporting obligations for other awards and those reports must reflect substantial progress towards the goals of their awards;
- Proposed expenses must be for a new activity, expansion of existing activities, or a combination of both. County funding cannot be used to supplant other funding for already planned activities;
- Applicants may only submit one application per organization under this NOFO; and
- Organizations that were funded under this program last year are eligible to apply. If submitting a multi-year application, please note that FY25 counts as Year 1. As such, they may submit applications that request funding for up to two more years.

E. Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

Eligible expenses under this grants program include operating costs defined as costs that support ongoing expenditures associated with projects. Illustrative operating expenses include but are not limited to:

- Administrative expenses to fund a Program Manager and support staff
- Community or business outreach
- Any expense incurred in the process of determining which commercial district management entity would be most beneficial for the corridor
- Implementation of neighborhood economic development activities
- Neighborhood place making and place management

Grant funds may not be utilized for the following:

- Capital expenses defined as expenses that are \$5,000 or more one-time costs for the purchase of a fixed asset. For example, procurement of a car, property, remodeling a property, building an addition to a community center etc.
- Any purchase or activity which has already been made outside the grant award period of performance
- Purchases or activities unnecessary to accomplish grant purposes
- Prior obligations of and/or, debts, fines, and penalties imposed on the Grantee
- Lobbying
- To supplant (replace) funds from other grant sources

F. Award Information

Montgomery County Government anticipates awarding \$414,600 through approximately one to three grant awards. It is anticipated that each grant award may range between \$100,000 and \$300,000. The final amount will be dependent upon grant activities and final negotiation and may be lower or higher than the range. The duration of any grant award under this solicitation is expected to be 12 months with possibility for renewal for up to three total years contingent on satisfactory performance and funds availability. The estimated start of grants awarded under this solicitation will vary based on when decisions are reached by the review committee and the fiscal year of the applicant. This Grant Program does not commit Montgomery County to make any awards.

G. Application Review & Awards

Montgomery County Government will recruit an independent Review Committee that will develop and submit recommendations for funding. The Review Committee will be composed of neutral, qualified individuals from Montgomery County Government, and possibly the broader Montgomery County community, selected for their experiences in the grant program's subject area, grants administration, project management, and/or ability to analyze programs from a Racial Equity and Social Justice lens. The panel members will review and score applicant proposals based on the criteria outlined in this program and submit recommendations for awards. Final decisions will be made based on the scores and such other factors and considerations as the County deems relevant at the time of award. These may include updated consideration of how well the applicant has performed on prior programs, the expert opinion of grant administrators with prior experience with applicants, updates to priorities, or other factors.

H. Award Notification

Award notification letters are expected to be released approximately one month after the application deadline via email. For successful applicants, the Grant Agreement will contain the total amount awarded and funding restrictions; programmatic, administrative, and policy requirements; reporting requirements; and payment terms.

I. Submission Guidelines

NOTICE: This grant program application and future grant opportunities released through the Office of Grants Management will no longer be using SM Apply to accept grant applications. This grant program will be using a new grant platform called Euna Grants (eCivis). Instructions for setting up an account are listed below, and an information session will be held to walk through this process.

How to Apply:

1. **Log into the Euna (eCivis) Portal to create an application profile**
<https://portal.ecivis.com/#/login>
 1. [Watch the eCivis \(Euna Grants\) Transition Video Training](#) with a walk through on how to set up a Euna Grants account.
 2. [Download the eCivis \(Euna Grants\) Transition Video Training Slides](#)
2. **Download and review the Euna (eCivis) applicant user guides for assistance prior to the Grant Program Information Session.**
 1. [Logging into Your eCivis Portal Account](#)
 2. [Reviewing and Submitting your application](#)
 3. [Transfer Application Ownership](#)
 4. [Guide for Applicants](#), including budget assistance

Applications must be submitted through the Montgomery County Office of Grants Management - Grants Application Platform through the links posted on the first page of this document. Once the applicant clicks on the link, they will be prompted to create a SM Apply account, select the FY24 Business Improvement Districts Grants Program, and then will be able to access the grant application. Applicants requiring an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation should contact the Office of Grants Management to discuss alternative submission options.

Applications are due no later than Thursday, May 15, 2025, at 11:59 PM. All applications will be recorded upon receipt. Applications received after the deadline will be disqualified and will not be forwarded to the Review Panel for funding considerations. Any additions or deletions to an application, unless requested by the Office of Grants Management will not be accepted after the deadline. Applications with incomplete, illegible, or corrupted digital materials will not be considered.

J. Information Session

An Information Session will be held on **Monday, April 21, 2025, from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM**. The link to participate in the Information Session live or to view an event recording afterwards can be found on the first page of this document or on the grants program application page.

K. Terms and Conditions

- County reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications if the County determines it is in the best interest of the County to do so. The County shall notify the applicant if it rejects that applicant's proposal. The County reserves the right to suspend or terminate an outstanding Grant Program.
- The County reserves the right to issue addenda and/or amendments subsequent to the posting of a Grant Program.
- The County shall not be liable for any costs incurred in the preparation of applications in response to the Grant Program. Applicant agrees that all costs incurred in developing the application are the applicant's sole responsibility.
- The County may conduct pre-award on-site visits or request additional information to verify information submitted in the application and to determine if the applicant's facilities are appropriate for the services proposed.
- The County may enter negotiations with an applicant and adopt a firm funding amount or other revisions for the applicant's proposal that may result from negotiations. The

County shall provide the citations to the statute and implementing regulations that authorize the grant or sub-grant; all applicable federal, State, and County regulations; payment provisions identifying how the grantee will be paid for performing under the award; reporting requirements, including programmatic, financial and any special reports required by federal, state, or County law and/or the granting department; and compliance conditions that must be met by the grantee. If there are any conflicts between the terms and conditions of the Grant Program and any applicable federal, State, or County law or regulation, or any ambiguity related thereto, then the provisions of the applicable law or regulation shall control, and it shall be the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.

SECTION II – APPLICATION TASKS

Applicants are required to follow the content requirements and submission instructions listed within the online application platform and NOFO document. Please submit your proposal, as broken out by each of the Tasks, by filling out the data fields or uploading documents where applicable. Uploaded documents should have clearly titled sections and sub-sections. Document uploads should ideally be submitted as PDF documents with budgets uploaded as MS Excel file. The application platform cannot read Mac formatted documents (i.e. Pages, Numbers, and Keynote). **Applications will be considered incomplete if any part of any section is missing.** Please note that Review Committees have historically preferred concise narratives focused on the funding priorities, questions asked, and scoring themes rather than long narrative descriptions.

A. Applicant Information Form

Organizations must provide the following information and documents using data entry fields or uploads. The document uploads will be used to assess legal eligibility for the Grant Program and data fields will be used to populate any resulting grant agreement. Applicants should fill out this information as if they were drafting a contract using specific and exact information.

- Legal Name of Applying Lead Organization as registered with the Maryland State Department of Assessment and Taxation (SDAT)
- Lead Organization's Maryland SDAT Department ID Number
- Lead Organization's Federal Tax Identification Number
- Lead Organization's website (optional)
- Contact Information for the Lead organization's Primary point-of-contact (POC)
- Contact Information for the Lead Organization's Secondary (POC)
- Upload: Current board list with names, affiliation and contact information, as applicable.
- Upload: Most recent IRS 990 Form for Nonprofit Organizations or an explanation of why your organization is exempt from filing 990s.

The County is required to check applicants' status of Good Standing (or equivalent status) with the Maryland State Department of Assessment and Taxation (SDAT) at the time of application review, finalization of grant agreements, and for payments during the life of a grant agreement. Although proof of Good Standing is not required as a component of the application, it is critical that Lead and Support organization applicants remain registered and in Good Standing with SDAT as applicants will be disqualified from a grant competition, delay or even lose a grant award, and/or face delays in grant payments if they are not in Good Standing. Applicants can verify their status with SDAT via this link:

<https://egov.maryland.gov/BusinessExpress/EntitySearch>

B. Applicant Background Task

The Office of Grants Management collects data through this Task for post-award analysis to understand application and award trends as well as how to support the diverse communities in Montgomery County. Data collected through this Task will **not** be visible to Review Committees and will **not** be used in evaluation and scoring of applications.

In line with Montgomery County's Racial Equity & Social Justice goals, the Office of Grants Management is collecting the racial and ethnic information on the leadership of nonprofit organizations. The structure of this portion of the survey is based on [federal standards for](#)

[collecting racial and ethnic data](#). Given the County's significant diversity, this survey is also collecting ethnic data. Note that the information entered should be based on how the person identifies themselves.

- Lead Organization estimated staffing size serving Montgomery County in a given year
- Lead Organization estimated budget, including by funding source, for Montgomery County programs, services, and other initiatives in a given year
- Lead Organizational leadership, including CEO or Executive Director and Board Members (if applicable), race and ethnic information

If choosing to provide race and ethnicity information for their board, applicants must use the [OGM Board Race-Ethnicity Reporting Template](#) and upload it into application. Responding to these questions is optional and will have no impact on application reviews.

C. Project Strategy Task (data fields with optional uploads)

The Project Strategy includes several data fields related to the proposal:

- **Project Title** – If awarded, the Project Title will become the name of the Grant Agreement (*100-character limit*)
- **Project Overview** – Brief description of the project (*600-character limit*)
- **Target Zip Codes** – List up to five of the most impacted zip codes by your proposal or indicate that the activity/service is Countywide. Additional context on service areas, locations, and beneficiaries may be elaborated on in the Project Strategy Narrative.

The proposal's Strategy Narrative should answer the following questions in the fields below. If an organization prefers, they may submit their strategy narrative in an alternative format such as a video or audio recording. Because of upload size limits, please post your videos to YouTube or a similar platform and provide a hyperlink to the video within your application. The submission will still need to address the questions below. If a question below does not apply to your proposal, please indicate that it is not applicable within the Strategy Narrative.

- **Progress Made** – Describe the steps your organization has taken to work towards becoming a BID or UDC (*3,000-character limit*).
- **Vision and Mission** – Describe the current vision and mission statements for the BID or UDC relevant to community condition and equity principles (*3,000-character limit*).
- **Community Support** – Describe how your organization has gained and/or will foster broad-based community support for the public and private sectors (*3,000-character limit*).
- **Operational Capabilities** – What are your organization's current capabilities to implement the proposed project? Please specify your capacity as an organization, including human and financial resources, as well as relevant experience. Feel free to reference other Tasks in this application (i.e., Staffing Plan) for more detail instead of repeating it in this narrative (*3,000-character limit*).
- **Other Key Capabilities** – What is your organization's capability to implement this project in an inclusive, culturally/linguistically sensitive way taking into consideration the Funding Priorities outlined in the NOFO (*3,000-character limit*)?
- **Project Partners** – List partnering organizations (business or property owners) for the applying organization and implementation of the proposed project (*3,000-character limit*).

The applicant will also have the option of uploading up to three documents (PDF format preferred) that complement the questions above; not replace them. These could include, but

are not limited to, maps, site plans, examples of related projects done thus far, evidence of progress, or other items that may be relevant.

D. Funding Request and Financial Form

The Funding Request and Financial Form includes several data components related to the proposal. Applicants may propose a multi-year budget of up to three years in length with an estimated inflationary escalation factor for each year. Program Budgets may include indirect costs. Indirect costs may include general administrative costs such as: legal, accounting, liability insurance, audits, and the like. If applicants have a federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), then they must use that rate within their application. Applicants without a NICRA may use a rate of up to 15%.

- **Year 1 (FY25) Montgomery County Funding Request** – Amount requested from the County for this fiscal year.
- **Year 2 (FY26) Montgomery County Funding Request (Optional)** – Amount requested from the County for this fiscal year.
- **Year 3 (FY25) Montgomery County Funding Request (Optional)** – Amount requested from the County for this fiscal year.
- **Total Year 1 (FY25) Project Cost** – Total cost of project from all funding sources for this year.
- **Financial Management** – Please describe the Lead Organization's grant and financial management practices. These may include, but are limited to, accounting standards used, description of financial oversight/accounting staff, software used, and other financial practices (*3,000-character limit*).
- **Cost Share** – Please outline and describe any non-Montgomery County cost share, including in-kind contributions, that will also be supporting this project (*3,000-character limit*).
- **Reducing Funding Impact** – Please specify how your project would be affected if total funding awarded were less than the amount requested. State whether your project could be completed with a smaller amount, and how your projected outcomes would be affected by any funding reduction (*1,000-character limit*).
- **Supplanting Statement** – If your organization does work regionally or has other funding sources, please provide us with information to reassure us that the Montgomery County funds will not simply enable you to shift current, non-County monies (supplanting funds) to operations outside the County but rather will allow you to add to or expand your work on behalf of services in Montgomery County (*1,000-character limit*).
- **Upload: Current Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) (optional).**
- **Upload: Public Copy of Most Recent Independent Audit Report, Financial Review, Agreed Upon Procedures** – If not available, please provide a brief explanation of why you do not have an independent audit.

Applicants will have an opportunity to provide detailed Budget Items and a Budget Narrative through the Budget Tool Task below.

E. Project Staffing Plan Task (2 page limit, PDF format preferred)

This section should detail the staff assigned or to be hired for the program, staff positions, and percentage (%) of time spent on the program. If the position is not filled, a projected start date as to when the position will be filled should be supplied. If applying as a collaboration, please

note the organizational affiliation of each staff member. Note that grantees in the past have sometimes had trouble hiring staff at very low wages; your application will not be penalized for proposing that staff be paid commensurate with their specialized talents and experience in delivering the proposed services.

The Staffing Plan should detail at a minimum for the incumbent, position to be filled, and/or contractors to be supported by the project:

- The name of the position;
- Expected salary or hourly rate for the position;
- Percentage of staff time to be dedicated to the proposed project;
- Any relevant degrees, licenses, certifications, or other professional credentials related to the project;
- Outline of language skills and/or cultural competencies; and
- Description of the position role in relation to the proposed project.

Note, if an employee is to be paid 100% through grant funds from this program, all their professional time, over and above routine administrative tasks, must be devoted to the proposed program's eligible work. Do not low-ball deliverables to allow program-funded staff to do work outside this grant. If you want the staff to be available to help efforts outside the grant, be sure to include only partial salary for that person in your staffing and budget proposals. Likewise, do not double count staff time paid for by other Montgomery County, Federal, State, District of Columbia, or private foundation grants.

The applicant will also have the option of uploading up to three documents (PDF format preferred) that complement the Staffing Plan; not replace it. These could include, but are not limited to, an organizational chart, resumes/CVs of key project leaders, position descriptions of unfilled roles, or other items that may be relevant.

F. Project Work Plan/Timeline Task (1 page limit per year, PDF format preferred)

This section should outline the implementation schedule of the proposed program over the 12 months grant agreement period of performance plus up to two years if the applicant is seeking multi-year funding.

The implementation schedule over the performance period should list:

- The program's objectives and related activities;
- Timeline for implementation and completion; and
- Responsible staff.

The performance period may assume specific start and completion dates or cover a generic period of time. The final performance period for an award will be contingent on when the actual grant agreement is signed by all parties.

G. Memorandum of Understanding Among Collaborative Partners (no page limit, PDF format)

If the proposed project will be a collaboration between multiple organizations then you must include a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the partner organization that outlines roles and responsibilities for implementing the project. The MOU should also include an outline of how County grant funds will be disbursed among the collaborators as well as the expected financial contributions to the project from each of the partners. The MOU must be

signed by duly authorized representatives of all collaborating organizations and may be as long as necessary. **Note that the organization submitting the application will be the one signing any awarded grant agreement and will be the one accountable to its terms.**

Organizations who will be applying as a single entity will simply mark that the proposed capital project is not a collaborative effort.

H. Performance Plan and Performance History (data fields and 1 page limit each, PDF format preferred)

The Performance Plan and Performance History outline key milestones, performance indicators and evidence of performance capability. The Performance Plan looks forward on what would be accomplished if funds are provided while the Performance History document looks backwards demonstrating the accomplishments and successes of the applicant thus far. Given that applicants are anticipated to be at various stages of the three-phase BID/UDC formation process (i.e., planning, outreach, and legislative authorization), the performance plan should be tailored to the specific stage and echo the project strategy and work plan/timeline. Applicants are encouraged to review pages 37-43 of the [BID Toolkit](#) and develop a Performance Plan that fits their proposed strategy.

Organizations must provide the following information and documents using narrative fields or uploads.

- Description of Lead Organization's Data Collection and Management Practices (*1,000-character limit*).
- Upload of Most Recent Annual or other Organization Reports (optional).

Applicants are required to include a comprehensive **Performance Plan** and a separate **Performance History** in their grant application. The Performance Plan looks forward on what would be accomplished if funds are provided while the Performance History document looks backwards demonstrating the accomplishments and successes of the applicant thus far. Both documents should detail:

- **Milestones:** List the specific milestone to be achieved, a target date to achieve it, and the impact achieving it will have on the organization.
- **Qualitative/Other Evaluation:** Outline any qualitative or other evaluation methods the program will be using.
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** Select KPIs that are relevant to the project. Provide an outline of the metrics to be collected, targets for each metric, and the data collection method for each metric. Both target outputs and outcomes should be addressed. The metrics should align with the objectives outlined in the strategy narrative. Organizations should expect to regularly report on the actuals versus target indicators and be prepared to explain any deviations, whether negative or positive.

Additionally, applicants should provide evidence of performance capability to undertake the proposed project. Organizations should expect to report on the Performance Plan as a grant requirement as well as have regular check-ins with Montgomery County Government. The County also reserves the right to conduct site visits to events organized with the grant funds.

I. Budget Tool

In addition to the Financial Management and Funding Request Form, the proposal must provide detailed **Budget Items** and a **Budget Narrative** through the Euna Grants pop-up Budget Tool.

that outlines how the proposed costs and why they are essential for the project. The Euna Grants [Guide for Applicants](#) has detailed guidance on pages 13 through 20 on how to fill out the Budget Tool.

Applicants must enter a proposal into the Euna Grants budget pop up tool for this application. The structure, categories, and data fields for the **Budget Items** tool are based on the federal [SF-424A](#) format for operating projects. Each added line-item should detail all proposed costs with the option of automatically adding a proportional amount of Indirect Costs. In addition, the proposal must include a **Budget Narrative** (8,000 character limit) that must provide a brief description of each the Budget Items. This should include, but it is not limited to, a description of the cost, an explanation of why the line-item is necessary for the project, and how the value was calculated. If applicable, also describe the breakdown of cost-shares such as donations, other grants received, and in-kind or pro bono services that have or you anticipate being donated and that are related to this proposal.

Applicants must also consider the following when developing their budgets:

- Application budgets with activity-focused expenditures will be prioritized.
- Project Budgets may also include indirect costs. Indirect costs may include general administrative costs such as: legal, accounting, liability insurance, audits, and the like. **Indirect costs may only be charged on direct operating expenses, not capital expenses.** If applicants have a federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), then they must use that rate within their application. Applicants without a NICRA may use a rate of up to 15%.
- The Grant Program does not require a standard budget template so applicants should use whatever format meets the basic requirements, provides sufficient detail, and provides the best overview of expected costs under the proposal.
- If applying as a collaboration, please include the appropriate division of budget between the two or more organizations that are applying.

In addition to other limitations set in this program, program funds cannot be used:

- For lobbying;
- For capital expenditures (defined as one-time costs of more than \$5,000 for the purchase of a fixed asset. For example, purchasing a property, remodeling a property, buying a car, building an addition to a community center etc.);
- Direct transfer of funds to participants;
- To cover any expenses made prior to the grant award;
- To supplant (replace) funds from other grant sources;
- To support projects already funded by the County are not eligible for additional funding during the same fiscal year; or
- To support projects that wholly occur outside of Montgomery County (unless these services are exclusively for Montgomery County residents).

SECTION III – SCORING OF APPLICATIONS

Scoring Criteria

Applicant's proposal submissions will be evaluated using the following confidence ratings based on the below weighted criteria. Confidence ratings are another form of adjectival rating that allow evaluators to assign ratings more holistically. Confidence ratings provide evaluators the ability to look more holistically at the strongpoints and weak points of a proposal to capture raters' overall confidence in the applicant's likelihood to succeed, helping smaller organizations who may be stronger overall than some more seasoned larger organizations. Confidence ratings are identified by the federal government as an innovative practice that may help with reducing the lead time from solicitation to award.¹

3 – Confident	The Reviewers are confident that the applicant understands the requirements, proposes a sound and relevant project, and will be successful in implementing the proposed project.
2 – Somewhat Confident	The Reviewers are somewhat confident that the applicant understands the requirements, proposes a sound and relevant project, and will be successful in implementing the proposed project.
1 – Not Confident	The Reviewers are not confident that the applicant understands the requirements, proposes a sound and relevant project, and will be successful in implementing the proposed project.

Additionally, each criterion is attributed a specific weight out of a total of 100 points.

Criterion A: Project Goals and Grant Program Priorities (20 points)

In line with the priorities for the FY24 Emerging Business Districts Grants Program, the proposal (15 points):

- Demonstrates organization efforts towards becoming an independent business district
- Demonstrates broad-based community support for the commercial district revitalization process, with strong support from both the public and private sectors or proposes a plan for obtaining the needed community support
- Includes a vision and mission statements relevant to community condition and equity principles
- Includes clear and measurable milestones appropriate to the stage of BID/UDC formation
- Cultural proficiency, inclusivity of the LGBTQIA+ community members, and racial equity and/or linguistic considerations are built into the proposed approach

Criterion B: Sound Fiscal Management and Budget (20 points)

- Applicant demonstrates sound grant and fiscal management practices and will be able to submit financial reports and back-up documentation to meet administrative and audit requirements;
- Expenses listed in the Budget and Budget Justification are consistent with the Project Strategy, Staffing Plan, and other parts of the proposal
- Applicant's Budget and Budget Justification reflect eligible, reasonable, and realistic costs needed to implement the proposal and achieve the stated outcomes

¹ See [*Executive Office of the President, OMB Memo for Chief Acquisition Officers, Senior Procurement Executives on reducing procurement administrative lead time using modern business practices \(January 15, 2020\)*](#)

Criterion C: Organizational Capability and Programmatic Capacity (20 points)

- Applicant provides evidence of capability to undertake the proposed project
- Applicant demonstrates effectiveness in terms of internal structure, technical capacity, and personnel, in meeting the outcomes of the project

Criterion D: Performance Plan (25 points)

- The Performance Plan is aligned with the Project Strategy Narrative, Budget, and Work Plan
- The proposed milestones/benchmarks and KPIs are relevant, clearly defined, measurable, and time specific
- Applicant demonstrates in their Performance Plan a clear process to measure/evaluate its project

Criterion E: Soundness of the Overall Proposal (15 points)

- Proposal clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of proposed activities and, if funded, will result in the accomplishment of their stated outcomes
- The implementation plan within the proposal is realistic and achievable based on the proposed timeline
- The quality and feasibility of the proposed approach will ultimately lead to the formation of a viable BID/UDC

MISCELLANEOUS

- Those persons scoring the proposals on the Review Committee will confirm that they have no conflicts of interest.
- Neither the County Executive nor any elected official will be involved in the scoring of grants or determining winners and amounts of awards.
- Scores and award amounts are non-appealable.
- Scorers' comments and the scores themselves are deliberative and privileged and will not be released. However, applicants may request a feedback report from the Office of Grants Management summarizing the Review Committee's feedback. Winners will be announced publicly, and successful grant applications and award letters may be subject to release (with redactions as allowed by law).
- County officials may decline to debrief with unsuccessful applicants why their proposal was not granted, or their funding request was not granted in full.

SECTION IV – CERTIFICATIONS, ACKNOWLEDGMENTS, AND ASSURANCES

The applicant shall complete and return the Certifications, Acknowledgements, and Assurances listed with the application submission provided in the Application Certification section of the application in the online grants application portal. The specific items in this section are listed below:

Montgomery County Ethics Questions

Note that individuals employed by partner agencies such as Montgomery College, Montgomery County Public Schools, and WorkSource Montgomery do not count as Montgomery County Government employees for the purpose of this Grant Program. If you are unsure if a position applies, please contact the Office of Grants Management for clarification.

- Does your organization employ current employees or contractors of the Montgomery County Government? This applies for employees that are paid by your organization but are also paid by Montgomery County Government.
- Does your organization's Board of Directors include current employees or contractors of the Montgomery County Government? This applies to volunteer board of director positions.

If you answered yes to either question, please describe the employee(s) role and function as it applies to your nonprofit organization. Answering “yes” to either question does **not** exclude your organization from being eligible to apply. Instead, we would like to receive this information upfront so that we can allow adequate time for the Ethics Commission to review.

Acknowledgements Agreed to by All Applicants

- ✓ Applicant acknowledges that this grant application may not be revised or altered after submission.
- ✓ Applicant acknowledges that if funding is awarded, the organization will enter into a non-competitive contract or grant with the County.
- ✓ Applicant acknowledges that awards may not be distributed as a lump sum but may be reimbursed or provided on a fixed schedule after sufficient documentation is submitted to the administering County agency.
- ✓ Applicant acknowledges that any funds submitted for reimbursement must be spent AFTER the contract is finalized and a Notice to Proceed is secured.
- ✓ Applicant has cited in this application all individuals affiliated with the organization and this program who are employed by Montgomery County.

Assurances Agreed to by All Applicants

If the grant is awarded, the applicant assures that:

- ✓ The applicant will administer all awarded funds through this grant program.
- ✓ Funds received will be used solely for the documented activities within the submitted proposal.
- ✓ The applicant has read and will conform to the program guidelines and any other conditions imposed by the County in connection with the grant.
- ✓ The applicant organization intends to comply with the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, indicating that no person will be excluded from participation or be denied the benefits

of any program, activity or service on the basis of race, sex, sexual preference, color, religion, ancestry, age, national origin, or handicap. The applicant further agrees to make every attempt to ensure that the program is accessible to persons with disabilities.

- ✓ Please note that applications are subject to the Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) (found at Md. Code Ann., State Gov't., §10-611 through -628 (MPIA) and the County must comply with the disclosure requirements of the MPIA when a request for documents is received.
- ✓ The applicant understands that all grantees that receive awards under this Grant Program must show proof of insurance prior to receiving the funds., when requested, must be able to show proof of all insurance coverage required by law.
- ✓ The applicant agrees that any time before final payment and three (3) years thereafter, the County may have the grantee's expenditure statements and source documentation audited.
- ✓ If there are any changes that need to be made to the grant application after submittal or if the organization ceases operations or becomes a subsidiary of another organization, you have the responsibility of notifying the appropriate County administrator.
- ✓ The filing of this application is made by the undersigned individual, officially authorized to represent the applicant organization by its governing board.
- ✓ I hereby certify that information submitted in the grant application is a true and correct statement of facts. I, as a designated legal representative of the Organization, further certify that this Organization shall abide by and be subject to all applicable Federal, State and Local laws and regulations pertaining to any subsequent grant that may be issued.