

Building Community Services that Grow Local Economies (BCS) Capacity Building Assistance Policies & Procedures

I. Purpose Statement

The **Building Community Services that Grow Local Economies (BCS)** program is a joint effort of ACTION, Inc., Community Connection of Northeast Georgia (CC), and the Institute for Nonprofit Organizations in the School of Social Work at the University of Georgia (The Institute).

The BCS program recognizes that social service providers are contributing to economic recovery issues by addressing barriers to full participation in the economy. Their activities address local needs and include everything from providing job-skills training to creating jobs.

The purpose of BCS is to provide capacity building training, technical assistance, and financial assistance to community-based and faith-based nonprofit organizations that address the broad economic recovery issues present in Barrow, Clarke, Elbert, Greene, and Jackson counties, including helping low-income individuals secure and retain employment, earn higher wages, obtain better-quality jobs, and gain greater access to state and Federal benefits and tax credits. Capacity building assistance refers to activities that **enhance the organization's ability to provide the economic recovery services discussed. **All training and technical assistance will be provided free of charge to successful applicants.****

Capacity Building Assistance will be designed to increase the awardees' ability to respond to organizational needs, expand services, diversify funding, engage in effective long-term planning, and create collaborations that enhance performance in 3 major areas:

- Creating a system of support that transitions clients from unemployment to self-sustainability that addresses gaps in this process
- Helping clients overcome barriers to securing and retaining employment
- Partnering with public and private sectors to increase job creation and enhance business retention and expansion activities

To achieve these objectives, organizations participating in the BCS program will receive tailored Capacity Building Assistance in at least three of the following five critical areas: 1) organizational development, 2) program development, 3) collaboration and community engagement, 4) leadership development, and 5) evaluation of effectiveness.

Capacity Building Assistance will take the form of an average of 16 hours of one-on-one technical assistance and 8 hours of group training. All Capacity Building Assistance will be tailored to meet the unique capacity building needs of each organization identified through a needs assessment. In addition to tailored technical assistance and training, BCS organizations may be eligible for financial assistance that supports capacity building activities.

II. Eligibility

The BCS program welcomes applications for Capacity Building Assistance from community-based and faith-based nonprofit organizations engaged in economic recovery. The organization is not required to be tax-exempt according to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, **but must provide evidence of charitable activities outlined in the Economic Recovery Services listed below and must show proof of nonprofit status.** Organizations must be located in and serve clients in one or more of the following counties: Barrow, Clarke, Elbert, Greene, and Jackson.

III. Economic Recovery Services

This section describes types of economic recovery services that **nonprofit organizations applying for Capacity Building Assistance must currently provide or desire to enhance their ability** to provide. Below is a list of **examples** of types of economic recovery services that are priorities:

- A. Foster job creation
 - 1. Help potential employers create jobs by addressing barriers to business retention and expansion
 - 2. Promote Social Enterprise through entrepreneurship and small business development
- B. Help low-income individuals secure and retain employment
 - 1. Act as a liaison between clients, employers, other nonprofits, and educational institutions
 - 2. Align job training activities with the local job market
 - 3. Provide effective training that meets the needs and job-readiness of clients
 - 4. Target services to help low-income individuals earn higher wages and obtain better-quality jobs
 - 5. GED preparation and assistance
 - 6. Higher education assistance
- C. Stabilize low-income individuals for employment by
 - 1. Improving credit and personal reputation
 - 2. Building human capital and social bonding
 - 3. Addressing criminal record
 - 4. Addressing non-work related issues that are currently a barrier to employment
 - 5. Increasing access to stable, affordable housing
 - 6. Increasing access to dependent care
 - 7. Increasing access to transportation
 - 8. Connecting eligible people to public, work-support benefits including SSI, EITC, Food Stamps, TANF
- D. Creating a system of support that transitions clients from unemployment to self-sustainability that addresses gaps in this process
 - 1. Increase collaboration with and capacity of other service providers to meet the employment needs of low-income individuals

IV. Capacity Building Assistance Services

This section describes the types of **free technical assistance and training that successful applicants will receive.** If chosen, an organization will receive Capacity Building Assistance that is individualized to meet its unique strengths and needs. The BCS Program's goal is to make organizations stronger so their program delivery can be stronger. Capacity Building Assistance will be provided in the five capacity building areas identified in the above Purpose Statement. **Below is a list of examples of types of training and technical assistance available per capacity building area:**

- A. Organizational Development
 - 1. Strengthening Board Governance
 - 2. Developing Systems: Management, Human Resources, Financial, Information Technology, Planning, Fundraising and Development
 - 3. Training Job/Benefits Counselors for ARRA Benefits and Other Federal Assistance
 - 4. Developing Comprehensive Communications Strategy
 - 5. Organizational legal assistance
 - 6. Social Enterprise and Business Development
- B. Program Development
 - 1. Creating Information Systems (e.g., ARRA Benefits/Programs, Financial Benefits/Tax Credits, Social Service Benefits)
 - 2. Translating Program Information into Spanish or other languages
 - 3. Developing Curriculum (e.g., job retraining, new job skills)
 - 4. Making Program Improvement
- C. Collaboration and Community Development
 - 1. Disseminating information regarding State/Local ARRA benefits
 - 2. Developing referral systems internally and with other service providers
 - 3. Forging collaborations/strategic partnerships with community colleges or vocational schools
 - 4. Conducting research on local sector workforce needs
 - 5. Developing collaborations/strategic partnerships across private and public sectors and with industry-specific training programs
 - 6. Utilizing AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers to address needs of those seeking employment
 - 7. Assessing green needs of community skills needed for green workers
- D. Leadership Development
 - 1. Specifying Board composition and function
 - 2. Contributing to staff professional and career development
 - 3. Training and development of volunteers
 - 4. Developing succession planning
- E. Evaluation of Effectiveness
 - 1. Launching a formal Program Evaluation
 - 2. Developing and incorporating new program measures
 - 3. Incorporating best practices
 - 4. Assessing Program Outcomes
 - 5. Replicating effective program models

V. Financial Assistance:

Over the two cycles, 60 organizations will receive training and technical assistance tailored to each organization's unique capacity building needs. In addition, over the two cycles at least 30 organizations will be awarded financial assistance that supports capacity building activities. Financial awards will range from \$5,000 -- \$30,000 with an average of \$20,000 each. Organizations that apply for financial assistance will be required to submit a detailed budget and budget narrative in their Application for Capacity Building Assistance.

Organizations that receive financial assistance during Cycle One will not be eligible for additional financial assistance during Cycle Two. Organizations that receive training and technical assistance during Cycle One but not financial assistance will be eligible to apply for financial assistance during Cycle Two. Organizations that receive training and technical assistance during Cycle One and financial assistance during Cycle Two will

receive capacity building training and technical assistance support on a limited, as needed basis during Cycle Two.

VI. Financial Assistance Restrictions

In order to comply with federal guidelines financial assistance is not available to provide the following:

- A. Providing direct social services or supplanting direct services: Sub-awards should not be used for “direct” services. Rather, they should be used to improve the sub-awardees’ efficiency and capacity. See the following examples:
 - 1. An organization that distributes food to the poor is not allowed to use financial assistance simply to purchase additional food. This type of organization could use the financial assistance to send workers to trainings regarding new developments in food distribution and hunger policy or to develop an internal system to better manage their program.
 - 2. An organization that provides substance abuse treatment services could not use financial assistance simply to enable it to provide exactly the same services to more people (i.e. hiring a new Substance Abuse Counselor). This organization could use funds to hire a consultant to perform an evaluation on the agency or to purchase additional equipment that will enhance the organization’s programs (i.e. new computer software specialized to their specific treatment program).
 - 3. Although the unallowable uses described above might enable the organizations to assist additional individuals, they would not serve to improve the organizations’ overall, long-term sustainability, efficiency, or capacity.
- B. Providing medical services
- C. Direct fundraising activities
- D. Purchase of real property (buildings or land)
- E. Construction activities
- F. To build capacity to provide inherently religious activities. Note: if organization provides programs or services that include inherently religious activities, then such activities **must be separate in time or place from the programs or services the organization is seeking to improve through the training and technical assistance and/or financial assistance.**
- G. Pre-award costs

VII. Financial Assistance Uses: please refer to Capacity Building Assistance Services section above for types of activities that financial assistance can be used for. Activities that support the types of activities listed will be allowed. Funds must support or improve the organizations capacity to provide economic recovery related services, but not provide DIRECT services. We recommend that organizations requesting financial assistance contact the project director, via email, within 15 days following the release of the Application if they have questions regarding the eligibility of their plans for the use of financial assistance.

A. Examples of allowable uses of financial assistance include, but are not limited to:

- 1. Translating and printing program documents
- 2. Board Development activities (such as retreats, sending board member to training, developing board manuals, consultants)
- 3. Developing Staff trainings or purchasing needed curriculum to enhance service delivery
- 4. Hiring consultants to assist in approved activities
- 5. Equipment to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the program (computers, software, etc.)

6. Evaluation costs
7. Building capacity to provide job training related to job searching, interviewing, resume writing, and computer skills (setting up computer lab, training staff, purchasing curriculum or supplies for clients)
8. To support capacity to provide education /training (academic remediation, general education development, English as a Second Language classes, job retraining or training for new job skills such as those needed for green jobs)
9. To purchase computers or to set up a computer lab to provide free, online information on State and Federal benefits for low- and moderate- income individuals
10. To perform a local workforce assessment or other research designed to connect workers to employers
11. To develop a resource directory to help increase access to the benefits for which individuals and families are eligible
12. To establish a one-stop center where individuals can obtain free, customized benefits information, tax information, and/or apply for benefits and file tax returns
13. Developing Financial Systems and Fundraising capacity (purchasing QuickBooks, hiring a consultant to develop a fundraising plan, conducting an audit, hiring a part-time administrative assistant)

B. Examples of non-allowable use of funds include, but are not limited to:

1. Any of the activities listed above in the Financial Assistance Restrictions Section
2. Salaries for staff to provide current direct services
3. Direct support services such as emergency cash or food assistance

VIII. Deadlines

Application Deadline

Cycle One: January 22, 2010

Cycle Two: To Be Announced

Screening Committee decision

Mid February

IX. Review Process

When ACTION, Inc. receives a proposal, an acknowledgment of receipt is usually sent within seven days. Proposals are initially screened by staff for eligibility and completeness. If the request clearly falls outside these guidelines or is incomplete, it will be declined by project staff.

A Screening Committee will then review proposals. Applicants will be notified of the Screening Committee's decision by mid February for Cycle One. The Screening Committee will include representatives from BCS's lead institutions, key partners, and the Independent Evaluator:

- ACTION, Inc.
- Community Connection of Northeast Georgia, Inc.
- The Institute for Nonprofit Organizations in the School of Social Work at the University of Georgia
- Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
- Barrow County Commission
- Elbert County Commission

- Greene County Commission
- Jackson County Commission
- Athens Area Community Foundation
- Athens-Clarke County Department of Human & Economic Development
- Independent Evaluator

Other Review Process Considerations:

- The application process for receiving training, technical assistance and financial assistance is completely open. No recipients will be preselected or otherwise given a competitive advantage or discriminated against, including discrimination on the basis of the organization’s religious character or affiliation.
- There is no requirement for financial assistance applicants to provide matching funds. No preference will be given in the selection process if applicants offer matching funds in their applications.
- Activities by organizations receiving financial assistance will be governed by all applicable Federal laws and regulations.
- Priority is given to nonprofits with budgets of \$500,000 or less and those that are working in partnership with the Department of Family and Children Services regarding access to TANF funds.

X. Requirements for Awardees:

- If Capacity Building Assistance is awarded, the organization will be asked to sign an agreement which outlines the terms of the technical assistance, training, and financial assistance expectations and obligations including agreements for disbursement of funds and financial and programmatic reporting.
- All publicity should appropriately recognize assistance has been received from the ‘Building Community Services that Grow Local Economics Grant,’ a partnership of ACTION, Inc, Community Connection of Northeast Georgia, and The Institute for Nonprofit Organizations in the School of Social Work at the University of Georgia made possible by the Nonprofit Capacity Building Fund through HHS Administration for Children and Families.
- In addition, to evaluate the effectiveness of this Capacity Building Assistance all awardees must participate in an online pre and post assessment.
- The BCS Program has the authority to withhold and/or recover financial assistance in cases where it is, or appears to be, misused.