



**CITY OF FORT COLLINS OFFICE OF ECONOMIC HEALTH
Cluster Initiative Support Fund 2016 Application**

DEPARTMENT CONTACTS

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<http://www.fcgov.com/business/target-industries.php>

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The City of Fort Collins Economic Health Office (EHO) is seeking qualified local businesses, sector groups, and industry clusters for the 2016 fiscal year. Partners must share the City vision to advance programs and projects with a positive community impact. In 2006, the City of Fort Collins Council identified promising industry clusters to target as part of its economic health initiative. Industry clusters are geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, and associated institutions in a particular field that enhance productivity through collaboration. The City follows the triple helix approach (university, industry, government) for innovative growth, and allocates resources towards a number of local efforts. Target clusters include Bioscience, Clean Energy, Water Innovation, Technology, and Uniquely Fort Collins, which encompasses Fort Collins headquartered businesses in brewing, arts, local food, and cycling. Additionally, target sectors include manufacturing, health, and creative industries. The Economic Health Office remains steadfast in their support of targeted local industry clusters and regional sectors.

The City of Fort Collins aims to support the growth of key industries and sectors. This support will facilitate companies' access to:

1. **Peer networks:** opportunities to interact with peers. Examples include CEO roundtables, occupation-specific professional development workshops, and industry-specific, topical symposia.
2. **Suppliers and inputs:** better access to supplies or suppliers to reduce costs. Examples include recruitment of suppliers, purchasing cooperatives, and shared storage facilities.
3. **Talent:** increased access to qualified workers. Examples include customized training programs for key occupations, marketing to build Fort Collins brand in industry, informative relocation-oriented website geared at specific talent segments, collaborative recruitment.
4. **Markets:** increased visibility in market segments and improved market penetration. Examples include export/trade assistance, co-marketing opportunities at trade shows, trade delegation trips, and general marketing activities that promote a Fort Collins brand for the industry.
5. **Capital:** improved access to capital networks – local and beyond. Examples include local angel investor network, local revolving loan fund, networking opportunities with venture capitalists, events to raise awareness of Fort Collins entrepreneurs.
6. **Industry intelligence:** access to data and market research to inform business planning and strategic decision-making. Examples include shared access to industry databases and new sources, research assistance, industry conferences.

II. ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants must meet the following eligibility requirements. Priority will be given to proposals that include a collaboration of triple helix partners to leverage resources and expertise. The City acknowledges the importance of maintaining a well-rounded diverse portfolio of partners.¹

- Applicants must have their operations based in Fort Collins, or be partnered with a Fort Collins based entity.
- Applicants must be a group of businesses or a non-profit umbrella organization; applications that benefit a sole entity will be disqualified.
- Applicants must have matching funds that establish a 1:1 public-to-private funding ratio. Third-party investors may include such entities as another company or companies, a venture capital firm, angel investors, and federal, state or local government grants.
- Applicants that are able to address and align with existing City and State strategies and priorities will be viewed favorably. (Examples: City of Fort Collins Climate Action Plan, City of Fort Collins Economic Health Strategic Plan, State of Colorado Economic Blueprint, etc.)

¹ The City does not provide funding for capital expenditures, and reserves the right to not fund overhead expenses.

III. APPLICATION AND REVIEW SCHEDULE

The City of Fort Collins Economic Health Office has established the following application deadline and review/decision schedule:

Application Open	Pre-bid Conference	Application Deadline	Applicant Interviews	Finalists Announced	Award Decisions	Annual Report Due
December 17, 2015	January 6 th , 2016	January 20, 2016	Week of Feb. 8-12, 2016	February 19, 2016	March 4, 2016	December 16, 2016

An electronic copy of the application must be received by midnight MST on the deadline date. Please send the electronic application to shoughteling@fcgov.com. The application may also be submitted in paper-form to the Economic Health Office at PO Box 580, Fort Collins, CO, 80521, attention: Sam Houghteling. Applications must include an original signature on the certification page.

*All funds are available for first cycle applicants. If funds remain after the first cycle, they will be available in a second cycle, to be announced at a further date. Maximum requests should not exceed \$40,000.

IV. GRANT AWARDS

Funds available for eligible companies for fiscal year 2016 total **\$175,000**. The City of Fort Collins retains the right to withhold funding regardless of requests.

Payments

Payments will be disbursed in accordance with the specific terms and conditions of the project as outlined in the Grant Agreement, either on a quarterly, bi-annual, or annual basis. Payments may be contingent on project/program progress.

Budget Adjustments & Return of Unused Grant Money

Upon completion or early-termination of a project, any unused grant money shall be returned to the City of Fort Collins which will be de-obligated and returned to the Economic Health Cluster Support Fund.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW

Staff Review & Selection Process

1. EHO Staff will screen each application for compliance with the rules and statutory requirements outlined in this document. Only those applications that meet rules and requirements will move forward for committee review.
2. EHO will convene a Selection Committee ("Committee") to review and evaluate eligible applicants.
3. Applicants that move forward will be required to participate in a mandatory interview prior to award notification.
4. The City reserves the right to award partial funding, which will be discussed at the interview.
5. The City intends for the process to last no more than two months, from application submission to award disbursement. Committee Members will not discuss deliberations with applicants mid process; however, the Committee may provide professional feedback before the application submittal, and after the awards have been announced.

VI. EVALUATION CRITERIA

All applications are competitively evaluated by the CSFC with a focus on:

1. Growth in the targeted industries and sectors in terms of employees, wages, sales, talent, private investment, and establishments.
2. Continued innovation, which may be measured by patents, start-ups funded, business support, collaborative efforts, and research funded.
3. Greater visibility of Fort Collins and Northern Colorado, through local successes, and coordinated promotion/marketing.
4. Ability to address and align with the Cluster program goals:
 - **Peer networks:** opportunities to interact with peers. Examples include CEO roundtables, occupation-specific professional development workshops, and industry-specific, topical symposia.
 - **Suppliers and inputs:** better access to supplies or suppliers to reduce costs. Examples include recruitment of suppliers, purchasing cooperatives, and shared storage facilities.
 - **Talent:** increased access to qualified workers. Examples include customized training programs for key occupations, marketing to build Fort Collins brand in industry, informative relocation-oriented website geared at specific talent segments, collaborative recruitment.
 - **Markets:** increased visibility in market segments and improved market penetration. Examples include export/trade assistance, co-marketing opportunities at trade shows, trade delegation trips, and general marketing activities that promote a Fort Collins brand for the industry.
 - **Capital:** improved access to capital networks – local and beyond. Examples include local angel investor network, local revolving loan fund, networking opportunities with venture capitalists, events to raise awareness of Fort Collins entrepreneurs.
 - **Industry intelligence:** access to data and market research to inform business planning and strategic decision-making. Examples include shared access to industry databases and new sources, research assistance, industry conferences.
5. Connection to the strategies outlined in the:
 - The Economic Health Office Strategic Plan (<http://www.fcgov.com/business/pdf/FortCollins-EconomicHealthStrategicPlan-FINAL.pdf>)
 - The City of Fort Collins Strategic Plan. (<http://www.fcgov.com/citymanager/pdf/strategic-plan-2016.pdf>)

VII. CONFIDENTIALITY AND OPEN RECORDS

The City of Fort Collins Economic Health Office is subject to the Colorado Open Records laws (C.R.S. 24-72-101 through 24-72-112). Thus, documents and other materials received by EHO and its employees may be subject to public disclosure. EHO will deny the right of inspection of records considered trade secrets, privileged information, and confidential commercial and financial data, which applicants should clearly indicate on the application. The entire application may not be marked “confidential” however. Upon receiving an official open records request, EHO will immediately notify the applicant and as needed, seek legal guidance from the City Attorney. Committee members agree to treat applications and committee discussions as confidential.

VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Midyear/Annual Reports & Award Responsibilities

Each applicant that successfully receives funding from EHO must submit a midyear and annual report documenting accomplishments, results achieved, community impact, and monetary and other returns if applicable including jobs created. Applicants may be required to provide monthly/quarterly updates to EHO staff, as outlined in the Grant Agreement. The midyear/annual report template will be provided in the Grant Agreement, and must be electronically submitted by the dates in the Grant Agreement. Additionally, successful applicants may be required to participate in an annual EHO conference, EHO/Cluster marketing materials, and serve as a cluster ambassador.

IX. APPLICATION

To be eligible for financial support from the Local Cluster Support Fund program, a qualified entity shall submit to EHO a signed copy of the application narrative and additional application materials. Such application shall be submitted on or before the Local Cluster Support Fund Application Deadline (see Application and Review Schedule) in order to be considered in an application cycle. The application must be e-mailed to EHO by midnight MST on the due date. Should the deadline fall on a weekend, the deadline date is still relevant. The application should follow this format. Please address each statement and answer every question. Presentation and clarity are evaluated in the review of the application. Incomplete applications may not be considered.

Identifying Information

1. Name of applicant, and key organizational contact information.
2. Specific project/program/initiative title.
3. Key Contact (name, phone #, email address).
4. Key partners and collaborators, including research institutions, state/federal agencies, non-profits, local businesses, etc.
5. Identify organizational structure (501c3, corporation, LLC, etc).
6. List additional grants or private investment received. Early phase organizations with a high community impact can include a fundraising proposal.
7. Request amount total in budget sheet, and provide supporting documentation pertaining to matching third-party funding.
8. Number of employees, or community partners, and predicted growth. If possible, include data.
9. Identify any workforce gaps that affect your entity, or that you have addressed.
10. Has the applicant ever been involved in bankruptcy proceedings?
11. Does the applicant have any pending lawsuits?
12. Please list any prevalent patents, license agreements, or demonstration projects.
13. Please include at least one letter of support. This can come from a local partnering organization, community leader, national/international collaborator, etc.
14. Please include a signed W9 if applicable.
15. Does your organization currently hold a certificate of good standing from the Colorado Secretary of State?

Project Narrative (no more than 3 pages)

16. Describe your organization: vision/mission, organizational chart, size, etc.

- 17. What is the local community impact? Tell your story; be Northern Colorado specific, and include the larger implications of your local efforts.
- 18. How will this project impact current trends; emerging technology, clusters or sectors; established industry groups; or other identified gaps?
- 19. Please identify any job creation, enhanced wages, private investment, new businesses, collaborative efforts, start-up activity, research funded, or local/regional marketing and promotional opportunities as a result of your project.
- 20. How does this tie into the City of Fort Collins Economic Health Strategic Plan, The City of Fort Collins Strategic Plan, and the program goals listed in Section I.

Project Work Plan & Budget

- 21. Identify yearly tasks, major events, and milestones in a timeline format.
- 22. Please include a program/project budget in the application. Organizations that successfully secure funding will be asked to include a variance budget in their November annual report.

Management Team CV or Resumes

- 23. Please include curriculum vitae or resume for each member of the management team, which should include relevant background and accomplishments.

X. CERTIFICATION

I certify that:

- The project described in this application and for which the company is requesting funds complies with the statutory criteria, rules and application requirements identified in this application document.
- The applicant has a dedicated, matching source of moneys from a third-party that is equal to or greater than the amount applied for under the Program. Include pledge form or documentation to verify this. For early phase high impact projects, applicants may submit a fundraising proposal.
- The information contained in this Application, including all attachments and exhibits, are true and correct.
- The applicant company is headquartered in Fort Collins, or is partnering with an organization based in Fort Collins.
- The person’s or persons’ signature on these Certifications and Application are authorized to act on behalf of the applicant organization.

Name and Title

Company Legal Name

Signature

Date