

Local Cluster Support Fund 2016

- 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 receiving cluster funds advance programs and projects with a positive, economic community impact.
- In 2006, the City of Fort Collins Council identified promising industry clusters to target as part of its economic health initiative.

What is an 'industry cluster'?

- Geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, and associated institutions in a particular field that enhance productivity through collaboration and often follow a triple helix approach: university, industry, government.
- Target clusters include Bioscience, Clean Energy, Water Innovation, Technology, Manufacturing, and emerging cluster and sector activity such as brewing, arts, local food, health, and cycling.

Cluster 2.0

- The City of Fort Collins aims to support the growth of key industries and sectors. This support will facilitate companies' access to:
 - **Peer networks**
 - **Suppliers and inputs**
 - **Talent**
 - **Markets**
 - **Capital**
 - **Industry intelligence**

Eligibility

- 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.

Timeline & Funding

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

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

Evaluation Criteria

- Applications are competitively evaluated with a focus on:
 - Ability to address aforementioned (6) Cluster program goals
 - Growth in the targeted industries and sectors in terms of employees, wages, sales, talent, private investment, and establishments.
 - Continued innovation, which may be measured by patents, start-ups funded, business support, collaborative efforts, and research funded.
 - Greater visibility of Fort Collins and Northern Colorado, through local successes, and coordinated promotion/marketing.
 - Support of the Cluster Program goals (Section I), the Economic Health Office Strategic Plan, and the City of Fort Collins Strategic Plan.

Previously Funded Projects (2015)

City allocated \$175,000, and had \$377,000 in requests

- A sector partnership was awarded \$30,000 for continued vocational and technical skills training, facilitating industry connections, and strengthening the talent pipeline.
- A food systems non-profit was awarded \$30,000, to build capacity, identify high impact community projects, and prepare a regional marketing campaign for local producers.
- A sector partnership was awarded \$20,000 for workforce training & community education.
- A local music incubator, was awarded \$20,000 for talent development efforts, and arts & music promotion and marketing.
- An established cluster was awarded \$20,000 for a Transportation Area Study, a campaign advancing women in engineering, and funding for relevant topical symposia.
- A community based 3-D printing lab was awarded \$14,000 for enabling small-scale fabrication to expand innovation in Fort Collins.
- An established cluster entity was awarded \$11,000 for continuing to grow the bioscience mentorship network, building the bioscience pipeline, and support for emerging Northern Colorado bioscience companies.
- An entrepreneurial support organization was awarded \$10,000 ongoing programming that supports the startup ecosystem in Fort Collins.