FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY NAME: United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY TITLE: Funding Availability for the Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge

ANNOUCEMENT TYPE: Solicitation of Applications.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: RD-RPIC-2020

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NUMBER: 10.890

APPLICATION DUE DATE: September 10, 2020.

SUBMISSIONS: Applicants must apply to this funding opportunity electronically via Grants.gov with an email copy submission to RD.Innovation@usda.gov . The email Subject line must include the words: RPIC Application. The Agency will not consider any application received after the deadline. The Agency will confirm receipt of the application package within 48 hours of the deadline. If the applicant has not received an emailed confirmation within 48 hours from the deadline, please contact the point of contact under the "For More Information" section. Applicants who have been selected for funding will receive a letter of official notification and will be awarded a cooperative agreement authorized under 7 U.S.C. 2204b(b)(4). Pending funding availability, all awards will be made no later than September 30, 2020. Applicants should start their projects by October 1, 2020, and projects should be completed within 24 months.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact: Angela Callie, USDA Rural Development, Innovation Center, via email at angela.callie@usda.gov or via telephone on (202) 568-9738.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Preface

The Agency encourages applications that will help improve life in rural America. (See information on the Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity found at *www.usda.gov/ruralprosperity.)* Applicants are encouraged to consider projects that provide measurable results in helping rural communities build robust and sustainable economies through strategic investments in infrastructure, partnerships and innovation. Key strategies include:

- Achieving e-Connectivity for Rural America
- Developing the Rural Economy
- Harnessing Technological Innovation
- Supporting a Rural Workforce

- Improving Quality of Life

SUMMARY: The Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development is seeking applications from organizations to provide planning and/or implementation technical assistance to rural communities to foster placemaking under the Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge (RPIC). This funding opportunity will be administered by the USDA Rural Development Innovation Center and t is announcing up to $1,000,000 in competitive cooperative agreement funds in fiscal year (FY) 2020. This funding opportunity lists the information needed to submit an application for the funds and announces that Rural Development (the Agency) is accepting FY 2020 applications to support RPIC.

Part I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

Program Description.

The Agency is authorized to administer cooperative agreement awards in accordance with 7 U.S.C. 2204b(b)(4). The cooperative agreements to be funded through RPIC directly support Rural Development's goals of increasing rural prosperity and to improve the economy and quality of life in rural America by supporting essential services such as housing, economic development and required infrastructure In addition, existing assets that can be leveraged in support of a placemaking vision are evaluated and funding strategies and sources to enhance or construct new assets are identified. Awardees will be cooperators and are required to participate substantially in projects alongside rural development staff to bring to bear expertise in placemaking and partnerships that will enable a rural community, area or region to ultimately implement a placemaking strategy and improve the quality of life for its citizens.

The Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development (Agency) is seeking applications from organizations to provide planning and implementation technical assistance to rural communities to foster placemaking, which is the process of creating quality places where people want to live, work, and play. Ultimately, the goal is to create greater social and cultural vitality in rural communities aimed at improving people's social, physical, and economic well-being. The key elements of quality places include, but are not limited to, a mix of uses, effective public spaces, broadband capability, transportation options, multiple housing options, preservation of historic structures, and respect of community heritage, arts, culture, and creativity, recreation and green space.

Through a placemaking process involving public, private, philanthropic and community partners, this work is to be based on a sense of place with qualitative and quantitative outcomes. This funding opportunity is for placemaking visioning, planning and technical assistance efforts in rural communities under the Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge (RPIC).

Furthermore, the RPIC operates under the following beliefs:

- Creating livable communities is important for community developers and practitioners who implement these strategies in rural communities and areas and RPIC supports this development practice.
- It is important that Placemaking practices include both innovative and adaptive as well as established technical processes and solutions.
- Partnerships are a key element to the RPIC, and must be developed with public, private, and philanthropic organizations, creating new collaborative approaches thereby learning together and bringing those learned strategies into rural communities.
- Placemaking contributes to long-term investment and therefore supports a community's resiliency, social stability and collective identity.
- Broadband is an essential component to supporting placemaking initiatives.

This funding opportunity is for placemaking visioning, planning and technical assistance efforts in rural communities under the Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge (RPIC). The purpose of RPIC is to provide cooperative agreement funding to eligible applicants for a public-private partnership or partnerships with expertise and experience working with rural communities in placemaking to promote economic and social development in rural America aligning with the missions of existing USDA rural development programs. For purposes of this proposal, placemaking planning technical assistance is considered as quality multijurisdictional or multisectoral planning that includes but is not limited to the following:

- Evidence-based understanding of community assets, challenges and opportunities.
- A description of the distinct qualities of the community -- both positive and negative -- and how the Plan will respect and promote the distinctiveness of the community.
- A description of resources -- people, buildings, and environment -- that can be connected and mobilized to further the goals and implement the strategies in the Plan.
- A vision statement that summarizes the most important outcomes that the community wants to see achieved through this Plan.
- Focused goals and strategies that are logical, targeted, measurable, and timely with tasks identified and with a responsible party assigned.
- A statement of values that identifies the principles that leaders and stakeholders should use in determining strategies.
- Evidence of broad community participation, public input and buy-in.
- A description of the partners and the partnerships that led to the Plan.
- Persuasive format in a non-technical manner.
- Strategies intended to help produce, either directly or indirectly, improvements in the local and regional economy, with implementation strategies, fostering social and cultural vitality and adoption of broadband.

Applicants are expected to provide proposals under this scope of work that include cooperation through substantial involvement by both the cooperator and USDA rural development staff to support multijurisdictional or multisectoral rural communities and that demonstrate how placemaking technical assistance will be provided to a community to develop plans that improve the quality of life and increase rural prosperity aligned with the mission of USDA Rural Development. The proposal should provide a detailed description of the region and how it fits the definition of a region, multijurisdictional or multisectoral rural area. Funding will be prioritized to ensure geographic diversity. Our goal is to select at least one proposal per region. Regions are defined in Part VII. Applicants should identify which region or regions are included in their proposal.

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The anticipated amount available for RPIC in FY 2020 is approximately $1,000,000. Lead applicants may not submit more than one application but may identify more than one community with which they are providing placemaking assistance. There is no commitment by USDA to fund any application that does not achieve the minimum score. The maximum award amount for any one applicant is $250,000. Agency reserves the right to withhold the awarding of any funds if no application receives a minimum score of at least 60 points.

This funding opportunity lists the information needed to apply for these funds. This funding opportunity announces that the Agency is accepting FY 2020 applications to support RPIC.

B. Types of Applications

Applicants for RPIC, should be prepared to develop, in the process of developing, or have developed a placemaking plan in partnerships with public and private partners with the focus of local or regional revitalization towards economic vitality and quality of life impacts. The plans under development or being developed should identify potential projects that can be funded through RD programs, and other federal, state, local or private sector resources. Quality of life is a measure of human well-being that can be identified though social and economic indicators. Modern utilities, affordable housing, efficient transportation and reliable employment are economic indicators that must be integrated with social indicators like access to medical services, public safety, education and community resilience to empower rural communities to thrive. Placemaking plans developed through this funding opportunity should focus on one or more of these economic and/or social indicators.

Applicants are expected to submit placemaking proposals under this scope of work that include multijurisdictional or multisectoral planning partnerships, within at least one region as defined in Part VII, that will provide measurable results in helping rural communities create greater social and cultural vitality in rural communities. RPIC projects should also support rural communities' ability to qualify for priority funding under Section 379H of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, "Strategic economic and community development," [7 U.S.C. 2008v].

This approach to rural placemaking is: 1) rooted in emphasizing partnerships and collaboration among multiple public, private, and philanthropic agencies and community partners, 2) focused on combining federal, state and local resources to make wide-ranging quality-of-life impacts as opposed to separate, piecemeal, incremental improvements, and 3) based on placemaking processes to create quality places where people want to live, work, and play. Ultimately, the goal is to create greater social and cultural vitality in rural communities. The key elements of quality places include but are not limited to a mix of uses, effective public spaces, broadband capability, transportation options, multiple housing options, disposition and rehabilitation of vacant structures, preservation of historic properties, and respect of community heritage, arts, culture, and creativity, recreation and green space.

C. Rural Area:

The project must directly benefit a rural area. All ultimate beneficiaries and/or subrecipients must be located in rural areas, and any activities or tasks must occur in rural areas.

The term 'rural area' must conform to the Rural Business Service's Rural Area definition as out lined in Section 343(a)(13)(A)(i) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act which states: any area other than: (1) A city or town that has a population of greater than 50,000 inhabitants; and (2) any urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to such a city or town.

D. Number of Applications

Applicants may not submit more than one application. The maximum award amount for any one applicant is $250,000.

E. Activity and Project Types

The Agency encourages applications that focus on impacting rural community social and cultural capital and quality of life indicators through engagement and enhancements beyond the historical and functional benefits achieved by schools, healthcare facilities, and businesses as described in the Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity Report (www.usda.gov/ruralprosperity); (e.g. job creation, education, infrastructure, health, housing, public amenities/recreation, environment, cost of living, crime, etc.). Applications that contain a component of creating livable communities as a development process and include innovative and adaptive processes and solutions along with established technical ones are ideal. Partnerships are a key element to RPIC, and must be developed with public, private, and philanthropic organizations, creating new collaborative approaches thereby learning together and bringing those learned strategies into rural communities. Planning and placemaking practices that include long-term investment strategies to impact a community's resiliency, social stability and collective identify is a focus of RPIC.

Applicants are encouraged to consider rural communities, in their scope of work, that are currently engaged in addressing placemaking and quality of life measures in their planning and implementation strategies. These communities should be able to create strategies that include robust and sustainable investment planning. These innovative investments should focus on the social, cultural and economic benefits through strategic infrastructure, such as broadband, and partnership development.

Public, private and philanthropic partnership development needs to be a key driver of the work to address challenges and leveraging resources and expertise. Applications should focus on proposed or existing partnerships that leverage expertise and capital to further development and impact community social and cultural vitality. Successful plans/projects should include evaluation methods to provide measurable outcomes.

Substantial Involvement: Proposed project must include a component that allows for active participation by the Cooperator and the Agency in the majority of tasks. Examples of substantial involvement include but are not limited to the following: joint-convening of community members, partners, and stakeholders and joint-delivery of training on RD programs. It is the intent of this project to engage Agency and state RD staff actively in the placemaking process and it is the responsibility of the applicant to identify tasks where RD staff can provide substantial involvement in the project. If you do not identify those tasks, your application is not eligible for funding.

PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applicants must meet the following eligibility requirements by the application deadline. Applications which fail to meet any of these requirements by the application deadline will be deemed ineligible and will not be evaluated further and will not receive a Federal award. Applicant Eligibility: Federally recognized Tribes and Native American Tribal Organizations; institutions of higher education (including 1862 Land-Grant Institutions, 1890 Land-Grant Institutions, 1994 Land-Grant Institutions, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)); nonprofit organizations with 501(c)(3) IRS status; public bodies, or small private entities meeting the size standards established by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

All eligible applicants must demonstrate the capacity to deliver and support multiple rural placemaking planning activities within at least one of the four regions (Region Description found in Part VII). Capacity is defined as previous experience with federal grant administration and demonstrated experience in economic development and placemaking technical assistance.

Entities are not eligible if they have been debarred or suspended or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in Federal assistance programs under 2 CFR Parts 180 and 417 on debarment and suspension. In addition, an applicant will be considered ineligible for a cooperative agreement due to an outstanding judgment obtained by the U.S. in a Federal Court (other than U.S. Tax Court), is delinquent on the payment of Federal income taxes, or is delinquent on Federal debt.

B. Cost Sharing, Matching, Innovation Implementation Challenge

A minimum 15 % match of the total cooperative agreement award is required for all applications. If this matching fund requirement is not met, the application will be deemed ineligible. Matching commitments may be made in cash, confirmed funding commitments and/or third-party in-kind contributions as defined in 2 CFR 200.96. that are at least 15% of the cooperative agreement amount and committed for a period of not less than the cooperative agreement performance period. Applicants must recruit one or more private, philanthropic and/or public partner(s) to match fifteen percent (15%) (in cash and/or in-kind contributions) of the applicant's proposed funding request. Cost sharing/matching must be committed at the time of application submission. Applications must include written verification of commitments of cost sharing or matching support (including both cash and in-kind contributions) from third parties. Cost sharing or matching funds must meet the criteria stated at 2 CFR 200.306 and be valued in accordance with 2 CFR 200.306(d).

Additional details about cost sharing or matching funds/contributions are located at 2 CFR 200.306. Applicant matching funds must be included in the budget narrative. For matching funds offered by project partners, a separate commitment letter is required for each cash and/or in-kind match contribution. Commitment letters must be signed by the authorized organizational representative of the contributing organization and the applicant organization, which must include: (i) the name, address, and telephone number of the contributor; (ii) the name of the applicant organization; (iii) the title of the project for which the contribution is made, (iv) the dollar amount of the contribution; and (v) a statement that the contributor commits to furnish the contribution during the cooperative agreement period.

Applications without signed written commitments are deemed incomplete and will be ineligible. The value of applicant contributions to the project is established according to Federal cost principles. Applicants should refer to 2 CFR 200.306 for additional guidance on matching funds, in-kind contributions, and allowable costs.

Applicants have the option and can receive up to 10 optional discretionary points in their scoring (see Part V. B) if their proposal and budget provide a system whereas seed grant funds are set aside, for an Innovative Implementation Challenge. It is recommended that the seed grants are: (1) at a minimum of at least $5,000, for each ultimate recipient, and, (2) matched 50% with private, public or philanthropic support. The seed grant would be utilized to implement the plan by funding a new and innovative project identified in the "placemaking plan." These seed grants are considered small financial awards for the purpose of getting a specific and creative project implemented.

To foster private, public and philanthropic engagement, not only through RPIC but for the community itself, the Innovation Implementation Challenge seed grants must be matched by additional external funding to support the community's project, no less than 50% match. The external funds can be from private, public, philanthropic and/or other federal, state, and local partners.

Innovation Implementation Challenge Criteria for Seed Grant approval; projects should:

- Be innovative.
- Have been highlighted in the placemaking plan (See Part I. C).

- Have a probability of success and sustainability, with identified outcomes to be achieved.
- Leverage partners and provided letters of commitments.

PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Method of Application

Applicants must apply to this funding opportunity electronically; no other method or response is accepted. The deadline for receipt of a complete application through Grants.gov is midnight Eastern Standard Time on September 10, 2020, with a copy email submission to RD.Innovation@usda.gov . Email Subject line to include the words: RPIC Application. The Agency will not consider any application received after the deadline. The Agency will confirm receipt of the application package within 48 hours of the deadline. If the applicant has not received an emailed confirmation within that 48 hours from the deadline, please contact Agency Contacts found in the For More Information section above.

Applicants who have been selected for funding will receive a letter of official notification and will be awarded a cooperative agreement authorized under 7 U.S.C. 2204b(b)(4). Pending funding availability, all awards will be made no later than September 30, 2020. Applicants should plan their projects based on a start date of October 1, 2020 and must be completed within 24 months.

There is no pre-application process for this announcement. All checklists, application materials, and standard forms necessary for submission are included in the Grants.gov application package. Applications that are incomplete or fail to comply with the required content and formatting requirements will not be considered for funding.

a. Content and Format: Each page must be on numbered, letter-sized (8 ½ x 11) paper utilizing a white background that has 1” margins; and the text of the application must be typed, single spaced, black, and in a font no smaller than 12 point.

b. Executive Summary (1-page maximum): On a single page, provide the applicant entity name, duration of project (in months), amount of Federal funding requested, amount of non-Federal cost-share/match funding committed, and project title. Identify geographic locations and describe, in non-technical language, the placemaking approach to be used including the objectives and strategies to be utilized; the public, private and philanthropic partnerships developed or to be developed; the innovative approach to be employed (including the role of participating partners); how impact will be quantified; and the predicted benefits or deliverables of the project (s).

c. Standard Application Form: Standard Form 424, “Application for Federal Assistance” is included as part of the application package posted on Grants.gov. Instructions for completing the form are also included.

d. Applicant Qualifications (1-2 pages): Summary of the qualifications of the applicant organization is required. Interested applicant must have the organizational capacity, experience, and knowledge of rural placemaking and planning processes and must meet the following minimum requirements:

i. Demonstrate *capacity* to support multiple rural placemaking planning activities across a rural region or the nation;

ii. Demonstrate *knowledge and prior experience* in technical assistance and capacity building around long-term investment strategies to impact rural community's resiliency, social stability and collective identity. Applicants are encouraged to consider rural communities, in their scope of work, that are currently engaged in addressing placemaking and quality of life measures in their planning and implementation strategies. These communities should be able to create strategies that includes robust and sustainable investment planning.

iii. Demonstrate *capacity* to assist rural communities to develop and/or support innovative investment planning and implementation strategies that focus on the social, cultural and economic benefits through strategic infrastructure and partnerships particularly related to rural broadband deployment, digital inclusion and community placemaking.

iv. Demonstrate access to data for needs assessments and community data analysis as well as the technical capacity of staff; and

v. Demonstrate *knowledge and prior experience* of leveraging community assets and human capital in a placemaking process.

e. Key Personnel Qualifications (1-2 pages): Summary of the qualifications of each key person, including the project director, is required. Resumes or CVs will not be accepted. The summary should include relevant education, years of relevant experience, and key accomplishments. In addition, the summary should identify what each person's role will be on the project and a description of their relevant skills as they relate to the project. If it is expected that a portion of the proposed work will be contracted, but the contractor has not been hired, a summary of the required contractor qualifications must be included.

f. Project Proposal (15-page maximum): The project proposal must include a proposed Work Plan, along with the following information in order:

i. Project Background.

ii. Project Objectives.

iii. Project Approach/Methods.

iv. Geographic Locations or project areas, and identify the region as defined in Part VII.

v. Partnerships (public, private and philanthropic) developed or to be developed.

vi. Project Management (Applicants are required to include a Work Plan Chart that lists each major Task by Key Personnel involved, Time Period of the task, Substantial Involvement of Rural Development staff, Deliverables, and Budget associated with each task). Substantial involvement may include but is not limited to collaboration, participation, oversight, and control of the following:

- Authority to suspend work if specification or work statements are not met;
- Review and approval of one stage of work before another may begin;
- Review and approval of substantive provisions of proposed sub-grants or contracts;
- Prior review and approval of key personnel; and Agency collaboration and coordination with respect to deliverables and execution of the work plan. At a minimum, applicants should anticipate Agency participation the convening of community members, partners, and stakeholders; the delivery of training on RD programs and/or community development principles.

vii. Performance Metrics.

viii. Graphics, References, Citations (Do not count against the 15-page maximum).

g. Budget Information (10-page maximum): The budget portion of the application consists of two parts as described below:

i. Standard Form (SF) 424A, “Budget Information”: Non-Construction Programs. The SF-424A is included as part of the application package posted on Grants.gov.

ii. Detailed Budget Narrative: Provide a detailed narrative in support of the budget for the project, broken down by task. Discuss how the budget specifically supports the proposed activities. Justify the project cost effectiveness and include justification for personnel and consultant salaries with a description of duties. Statement(s) of work for any subcontractors and consultants must be included as part of the application. The budget’s narrative should include both the Federal funds requested and the applicant’s matching funds. The format of the budget’s narrative can be in a chart, spreadsheet, table, etc. It should be readable on letter-size, printable pages. The information needs to be presented in such a way that the reviewers can readily understand what expenses are incurred to support the project.

iii. As noted in Part III. B, the Budget section should summarize how the applicant will provide and leverage additional funds through private, public, or philanthropic partnerships for Innovation Implementation Challenge seed grants available to ultimate recipients, if the applicant chooses to use this strategy.

h. Certifications: All proposals must include the following signed certification forms, which are available at Grants.gov:

i. AD-3030, “Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants.” The AD-3030 must be submitted if entity is a corporate non-profit or for-profit corporation as indicated in the applicants SAM registration.

ii. SF-424B, “Assurances for Non-Construction Programs.” The SF-424B must be completed by all applicants.

i. Verification of Matching Funds. This includes a letter signed by the donating organization’s authorized representative on the organization’s letterhead that identifies the amount of matching funds or in-kind services, the time period during which matching funds will be available, and the source of the funds (e.g. cash on hand, etc.). See Section Eligibility Information (C 3) for more information.

j. Risk Review: The Agency may request additional documentation from selected applicants in order to evaluate the financial, management, and performance risk posed by awardees as required by 2 CFR 200.205. Based on this risk review, the Agency may apply special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed.

k. National Environmental Policy Act: This funding opportunity has been reviewed in accordance with 7 CFR Part 1970, “Environmental Policies and Procedures.” We have determined that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required because the issuance of regulations and instructions, as well as amendments to them, describing administrative and financial procedures for processing, approving, and implementing the Agency’s financial programs is categorically excluded in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulation found at 7 CFR 1970.53(f). It has been determined that this Funding opportunity does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

l. Civil Rights Compliance Requirements: All awards made under this Funding opportunity are subject to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as required by 7 CFR Part 15, Subpart A and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

m. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM). DUNS and SAM Numbers: Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to: (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number) in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. The Agency may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time Agency is ready to make a Federal award, Agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant. Applicants must obtain a DUNS and register in

SAM prior to registering with Grants.gov. Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply early for their DUNS number and SAM registration.

i. Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number: A DUNS number is a unique, nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. Applicants must obtain a DUNS number. Information on how to obtain a DUNS number can be found at http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform or by calling 1-866-705-5711. Please note that the registration may take up to 14 business days to complete.

ii. System for Award Management (SAM) Registration: SAM is the official Federal system that consolidated the capabilities of Central Contractor Registry, Federal Agency Registration, Online Representations and Certifications Application, and Excluded Parties List System. To register, go to: https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/. Please allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the SAM registration.

B. Submission and Acknowledgement of receipt:

All applications must be submitted using Grants.gov by the deadline date and time. Note that there are registration requirements for submitting applications using the Grants.gov system. It is recommend that the instructions for registering be reviewed as soon as possible, but at least two weeks before the planned application submission date. The requirements can be viewed at: http://grants.gov/applicants/organization_registration.jsp. All applications not received prior to the deadline will be rejected by grants.gov. Applications submitted in a format different from the above requirements will not be accepted or considered for funding. All required application documents must be submitted by midnight Eastern Standard Time on September 10, 2020 with an copy emailed to RD.Innovation@usda.gov.

Applicants must apply to this Funding Opportunity Announcement electronically; no other method or response is accepted. The deadline for receipt of a complete application is midnight Eastern Standard Time on September 10, 2020, via Grants.gov with an email copy submission to RD.Innovation@usda.gov . -Email Subject line to include the words: RPIC Application. The Agency will not consider applications received after the deadline. The Agency will confirm receipt of the application package within 48 hours of the deadline. If the applicant has not received an emailed confirmation within that 48 hours from the deadline, please contact Agency Contacts found in the For More Information section above.

Submitting an application through www.grants.gov requires completing a variety of tasks and steps. There are also several preliminary registration steps before the applicant can submit the application. To register in the Grants.gov system, go to www.grants.gov, click on “Applicants”, then click on “Get Registered.” If you have completed a prior Grants.gov application, you may already have completed the registration process. Please allow sufficient time to register in Grants.gov, and for possible system delays. Below are instructions for accessing the forms necessary to complete an application in Grants.gov:

i. Go to www.grants.gov. Information about submitting an application using Grants.gov is located on the Grants.gov website, along with supplementary materials.

ii. Select the “Applicant” tab.

iii. Select the "Apply for Grants” heading.

iv. Click on “Get Application Package.” Follow all steps.

v. Provide the “Funding Opportunity Number” or return to the “Search Grants” section.

vi. All necessary forms are included within the Grants.gov “Application Package.”

Applications not received through Grants.gov by the submission due date and time are not accepted for consideration. The emailed application must be assembled into one pdf file document in the order specified in section IV, part A. All applications must contain all of the elements of a complete package and meet the requirements described in this announcement. Grants.gov provides instructions for submitting the required application items through the portal. Application receipt date and time will be determined by the respective system-generated documentation of receipt date and time (Grants.gov provides date and time stamps for all proposals submitted through the portal).

The Agency is not responsible for any technical malfunctions or website problems related to Grants.gov or emailed submissions. If issues are encountered with grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov help desk at (800) 518-4726 or support@grants.gov. The applicant assumes the risk of any delays in application submission through Grants.gov.

C. Withdrawal: Proposals may be withdrawn by written notice at any time before award execution. Written notice of withdrawal must be signed by the applicant or an authorized representative.

D. Intergovernmental Review. Intergovernmental Review: Executive Order (EO) 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, applies to this program. This EO requires that Federal agencies provide opportunities for consultation on proposed assistance with State and local governments. Many States have established a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to facilitate this consultation. A list of States that maintain an SPOC may be obtained at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc. If your State has a SPOC, you must submit your application directly for review. Any comments obtained through the SPOC must be provided to us for consideration as part of your application. If your State has not established a SPOC, we will submit your application to the appropriate agency or agencies at our discretion. Applications from Federally recognized Indian Tribes are not subject to Intergovernmental Review.

E. Funding Restrictions.

i. Pre-award Costs. Pre-award costs are not authorized.

ii. Maximum award amount is $250,000.

iii. Use of Funds. Award funds may be used to pay up to 85% of the project costs. (a minimum of 15% match required).

iv. Period of Performance. The maximum Period of Performance is 2 years. Applicants should anticipate a Period of Performance beginning October 1, 2020 and ending no later than September 30, 2022.

v. Indirect Cost Rate. The indirect cost rate is limited to 10% of direct charges for all nonprofit institutions, including institutions of higher education. All other organizations must use the rate identified in their Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Approval (NICRA). If you do not have a NICRA, you may elect to charge only direct costs to the award. If you have never had a NICRA, you may also choose to use a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs in accordance with 2 CFR 200.414(f). Your indirect cost rate must be included on Form SF-424A.

vi. Program Income. If you expect to earn Program Income during the Period of Performance, you must identify the amount and how you expect to use it (e.g. Matching Funds) in your application. If your application is funded, unexpected Program Income or Program Income earned in excess of the amount you identify in your application will be deducted from the Federal share of the project in accordance with 2 CFR 200.307(e)(1).

vii. Prohibited Costs. In addition to costs identified as unallowable by 2 CFR Part 200, the following costs are prohibited for this program. Neither award funds nor matching funds can be used to pay for the following types of expenses.

a. Duplicating services currently provided;
b. Funding a revolving loan fund;
c. Construction (in any form);
d. Salaries for positions involved in construction, renovations, rehabilitation, and any oversight of these types of activities;
e. Intermediary preparation of strategic plans for recipients;
f. Funding prostitution, gambling, or any illegal activities;
g. Grants to individuals;
h. Funding a grant where there may be a conflict of interest, or an appearance of a conflict of interest, involving any action by the Agency;
i. Providing assistance to only one individual, organization, or business;
j. Paying obligations incurred before the beginning date without prior Agency approval or after the ending date of the cooperative agreement;
k. Purchasing real estate;
l. Improvement or renovation of the recipient's office space or for the repair or maintenance of privately-owned vehicles;
m. Any purpose prohibited in 2 CFR part 200 or 400;
n. Using cooperative agreement assistance or matching funds for Individual Development Accounts; and
o. Purchasing vehicles.

PART V. APPLICATION REVIEW REQURIEMENTS

A. General

Applications will first be reviewed to determine if they meet the eligibility requirements and compliance with the funding restrictions in this funding opportunity. If we determine that your application is ineligible, we will discontinue processing it, which means that we will not evaluate it further or provide any scoring information. We will notify you in writing regarding the reason(s) for ineligibility, and we will provide a description of your options if you believe that our determination is incorrect. Note that if our determination is reversed, either due to the discovery of an Agency error or through a formal appeal, funding is restricted to available fiscal year 2020 funds.

If your application is determined to be eligible, we will further evaluate it based on the following criteria. All applications will be competitively ranked and the minimum score requirements for a cooperative agreement award under this funding opportunity is 60 points.

B. Scoring Process

1. Number of Awards: The Agency anticipates that it may select one, multiple, or no award recipients from this funding opportunity. The Agency reserves the right to withhold the awarding of any funds if no application receives a minimum score of at least 60 points.

2. Evaluation Criteria: (see also Summary Table of Evaluation Criteria) Proposed projects will be evaluated based only on information provided in the application. References to websites or publications will not be reviewed, so full documentation and support of application criteria is encouraged.

a. Soundness of Approach (0-25 points). The applicant can receive up to 25 points for soundness of approach. The maximum 25 points for this criterion will be based on the following:

The objectives must be clearly stated in the proposal and the applicant must define how this proposal will be implemented. The applicant must demonstrate how the proposal will provide planning technical assistance to rural communities by supporting innovative and traditional placemaking approaches. For the purpose of this proposal, placemaking is considered as a process involving public, private, philanthropic and community partners working together to strategically improve the social, cultural, and economic structure of a community. This work is based on a sense of place with qualitative and quantitative outcomes. (10 points)

A proposal that strengthens the capacity of rural communities in supporting and implementing multijurisdictional or multisectoral placemaking plans. The applicant must demonstrate how the proposed technical assistance includes both the planning and implementation components. (10 points)

The applicant clearly outlines their ability to provide the proposed technical assistance based on clearly stated and well-documented prior accomplishments and how it will implement activities to support key strategies around quality of life indicators. (5 points)

b. Partnerships (0-15 points). The applicant can receive up to 15 points for quality of the applicant's existing public, private, and philanthropic partnerships and proposed new partnerships for this effort. The maximum 15 points for this criterion will be based on the following:

i. The applicant should demonstrate how their proposal will focus on the quantity and quality of partnerships, including the ability to leverage new partners that have previously had limited engagement with RD projects or priorities to leverage resources, enhance technical assistance, and/or increase reach to target areas. Target areas for this funding opportunity are geographic and ethnic diversity, which could include but are not limited to: (1) Opportunity Zones, and (2) Distressed Areas as defined by the Economic Innovation Group Distressed Communities Index (DCI), which combines seven complementary economic indicators into a single holistic and comparative measure of community well-being. The index is constructed from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates and Business Patterns datasets. (10 points)

ii. The proposal must demonstrate that partners with shared missions and goals will be engaged to amplify reach in rural areas. The applicant demonstrates how their proposal will support the quantity of match commitments to support this project, and percentage of match anything greater than 15%. (5 points)

c. Innovation (0-20 points). The applicant can receive up to 20 points for innovative placemaking methods and practices to foster simultaneously the adoption and the creation of greater social and cultural vitality. The maximum 20 points for this criterion will be based on the following:

i. The applicant's proposal should demonstrate the ability of the applicant to propose methods and practices to utilize unique and innovative engagement and planning methods that are currently not being implemented at scale. (10 points)

ii. The applicant's proposal should demonstrate the ability of the applicant to demonstrate that the proposed innovative methods and practices have been field-tested and ready to scale. (10 points)

d. Organizational Capacity & Qualifications (0-20 points). The applicant can receive up to 20 points based on organizational capacity and qualifications. The maximum 20 points for this criterion will be based on the following:

i. The applicant's proposal should demonstrate that the applicant or its partner(s) has knowledge and prior experience in placemaking related to rural areas and unique assets.

ii. The applicant should specify years of experience, types of communities served, previous benchmarking and outcome evaluation, and successes achieved. (10 points)

iii. The applicant's proposal should demonstrate that the applicant has identified appropriate key personnel, both in terms of number of personnel and qualifications of personnel, to carry out the approach identified. Capacity of personnel to access data for needs assessments and access to planners and other technical experts will be evaluated. (10 points)

e. Work Plan (0-10 points). The applicant can receive up to 10 points based on the quality of the proposed work plan and approach. The maximum 10 points for this criterion will be based on the following:

i. Applicants should include in their workplan the following information: 1. Description of objective, background approach, timeframe for key tasks along with substantial involvement, budget and deliverables that are necessary to implement placemaking practices to foster simultaneously the adoption of broadband services and the creation of greater social and cultural vitality. 2. Reasonableness and appropriateness of key tasks will be evaluated based on proposed project approach. 3. The applicant's proposal should include a description and appropriateness of the tasks to incorporate active participation from RD staff (reference substantial involvement). (5 points)

ii. The applicant's proposal should include a description of the types and general locations of rural communities to be served through this project, including the ability to support multiple rural planning activities on a multijurisdictional or multisectoral basis or across the nation and the reasonableness of effectively serving these communities based on key personnel, established timeframes, and budget. (5 points)

f. Performance Measures (0-10 points). The applicant can receive up to 10 points based on the proposed performance measures to evaluate progress and impact of proposed project. Performance indicators are aligned with strategic goals, measure impact on people, tie outcomes to inputs, and are iterated over time.

The maximum 10 points for this criterion will be based on the following:

i. The applicant's proposal should include a description for how the results of the technical assistance will be measured, including the quality of life indicators and benchmarks to be used to measure effectiveness. Benchmarks and any indicators should be specific and quantifiable. (5 points)

ii. The applicant's proposal should include a description of benchmarks and outcomes achieved during previously deployed planning efforts. (5 points)

g. Optional Discretionary Points (0-10 points) Applicants have the option and can receive optional points in their scoring if their proposal and budget provide a system whereas seed grant funds are set aside, from the applicant's award funds, for an Innovative Implementation Challenge. It is recommended that the seed grants are at a minimum of at least $5,000, for each ultimate recipient community or entity and matched 50% with private, public or philanthropic support. The seed grant would be utilized to fund a new and innovative project that was highlighted in the "plan." These seed grants are considered small financial awards for the purpose of getting a specific project implemented.

To foster private, public and philanthropic engagement, not only through RPIC but for the community itself, the Innovation Implementation Challenge seed grants must be matched by additional external funding to support the community's project, no less than 50% match. The external funders can be from private, public, philanthropic and/or other federal, state, and local partners.

Innovation Implementation Challenge Criteria for Seed Grant approval; projects should:

- Be innovative,
- Have been highlighted in the placemaking plan (See Part I. C),
- Have a probability of success and sustainability, with identified outcomes to be achieved, and
- Leverage partners and provided letters of commitments.

C. Review and Selection Process: All eligible applications will be evaluated based on the process described below.

i. Review Process. All eligible applications will be evaluated by an Application Review Panel using the criteria described in Part V of this funding opportunity. Panel members will be appointed by the Agency and they will be qualified to evaluate the applications, based on the type of work proposed by the applicant.

ii. Selection Process. Applications will be ranked in descending order, according to the scores awarded by the Panel. Applications will be funded in rank order, until all available funds have been expended. Applications, at or near the funding line, may be funded in part, if the Agency believes an appropriate benefit can result from partial funding and if the applicant agrees to the amount of partial funding. In the event the Agency considers partial funding to be appropriate, we will contact the applicant and negotiate the final work plan and budget prior to approving an award.

iii. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates. All awards must be obligated by September 30, 2020.

PART VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the USDA RD, Innovation Center awarding official shall make grants, up to $250,000, to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the USDA RD, Innovation Center awarding official as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than September 30 of the federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. The project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by USDA RD, Innovation Center under this funding opportunity may be used only for the purpose for which they are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, regulations, terms and conditions of the award, applicable federal cost principles, USDA assistance regulations, and 2 CFR part 200.

B. Federal Award Notices:

1. Successful applicants. Successful applicants will be notified in writing by the Agency with a Letter of Conditions (LOC). The LOC is a notice of selection and does not indicate that an award has been approved, nor is it an authorization to begin performance on the award. While there may be special conditions that apply on a case-by-case basis, the following conditions are standard for all successful applicants.

i. Complete Form RD 1942-46, "Letter of Intent to Meet Conditions."

ii. Complete Form RD 1940-1, "Request for Obligation of Funds."

iii. Complete FMMI Vendor Code Request Form.

iv. Provide a copy of your organization's Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.

v. Certify that all work completed for the award will benefit a rural area.

vi. Certify that you will comply with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 and report information about subawards and executive compensation.

vii. Certify that the U.S. has not obtained an outstanding judgement against your organization in a Federal Court (other than in the United States Tax Court).

viii. Execute Form SF-424B, "Assurances – Non-Construction Programs."

ix. Execute Form SF-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," if applicable or certify that your organization does not lobby.

x. Execute Form AD-1047, "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters-Primary Covered Transactions."

xi. Obtain a certification on Form AD-1048, "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Covered Transactions," from anyone you do business with as a result of this award.

xii. Execute Form AD-1049, "Certification Regarding a Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (Grants)."

xiii. Execute Form AD-3031, "Assurance Regarding Felony Conviction or Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants."

xix. Execute Form RD 400-4, "Assurance Agreement."

Once the conditions described in the LOC have been met, the award will be approved through the execution of Form RD 4280-2 in conjunction with the RDCA Program Attachment. If an applicant is unable to meet the conditions of the award within 90 calendar days, the award will be withdrawn.

2. Unsuccessful applicants. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing no later than October 31, 2020.

3. Administrative and National Policy Requirements. The terms of the award are available at: http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/efcommon/eFileServices/eForms/RD4280-2.PDF. Reporting Requirements. The following reporting requirements apply to awards made through this program.

i. Performance Reports: Form SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report," must be submitted quarterly based on the following time periods: January 1 – March 31, April 1 – June 30, July 1 – September 30, and October 1 – December 31. Quarterly reports are due within 30 calendar days of the end of the reporting period. A final report is due within 90 calendar days of the completion of the project or the end of the period of performance, whichever comes first. Both quarterly and final performance reports must be submitted electronically to Agency Contact in the For More Information section above.

ii. Financial Report: Form SF-425, "Federal Financial Report" must be submitted quarterly based on the following time periods: January 1 – March 31, April 1 – June 30, July 1 – September 30, October 1 – December 31. Quarterly reports are due within 30 calendar days of the end of the reporting period. A final report is due within 90 calendar days of the completion of the project or the end of the period of performance, whichever is comes first. Both quarterly and final reports must be submitted electronically to Agency Contact in the For More Information section above.

iii. Report Suitable for Public Distribution: A report suitable for public distribution that describes the accomplishments of the project is due within 90 calendar days of the completion of the project. There is no format prescribed for this report, but it is expected that it will be 1-2 pages in length and describe the project in such a way that a member of the public not familiar with the project would gain an understanding of the impact of the project.

PART VII. DEFINITIONS

Cooperative Agreement Elements: The cooperative agreements to be funded through RPIC directly support Rural Development's goals of increasing rural prosperity. As part of the placemaking planning process, required infrastructure, community facilities, housing and/or business development to support the ultimate placemaking goal are documented. In addition, existing assets that can be leveraged in support of a placemaking vision are evaluated and funding strategies and sources to enhance or construct new assets are identified. Cooperators are expected to bring to bear expertise in placemaking and partnerships that will enable a rural community, area or region to ultimately implement a placemaking strategy and improve the quality of life for its citizens.

Placemaking: A process involving public, private, philanthropic and community partners working together to strategically improve the social, cultural, and economic structure of a community. This work is based on a sense of place with qualitative and quantitative outcomes. For the purpose of RPIC, the following beliefs are held:

- Creating livable communities is important for community developers and practitioners who implement these strategies in rural communities and areas and RPIC supports this development practice.
- Placemaking practices that include innovative and adaptive processes and solutions along with established technical ones are important.
- Partnerships are a key element and must be developed with public, private, and philanthropic organizations, creating new collaborative approaches thereby learning together and bringing those learned strategies into rural communities.
- Placemaking contributes to long-term investment and therefore supports a community's resiliency, social stability and collective identity.

Quality of life: A measure of human well-being that can be identified though economic and social indicators. Modern utilities, affordable housing, efficient transportation and reliable employment are economic indicators that must be integrated with social indicators like access to medical services, public safety, education and community resilience to empower rural communities to thrive.

Partnership: A relationship involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities in the management of the project.

Public and Private Entities: Public or private groups, organizations, or institutions that have established and demonstrated capacities to conduct projects that accomplish the purposes of the program as designated in these guidelines.

Region (Four Regions):

- The **Northeast** includes Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania.
- The **Midwest** consists of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas.
- The **South** includes Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands and Oklahoma.
- The **West** comprises Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Hawaii and U.S. Pacific Island Territories.

Rural Area: For the purpose of this funding opportunity, rural area means the Rural Business Service's Rural Area definition as out lined in Section 343(a)(13)(A)(i) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act which states: any area other than: (1) A city or town that has a population of greater than 50,000 inhabitants; and (2) any urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to such a city or town.

Placemaking plan/planning assistance: Planning technical assistance is considered as quality multijurisdictional, or multisectoral planning that includes but is not limited to the following:

- Evidence-based understanding of community assets, challenges and opportunities.
- A description of the distinct qualities of the community -- both positive and negative -- and how the Plan will respect and promote the distinctiveness of the community.
- A description of resources -- people, buildings, and environment -- that can be connected and mobilized to further the goals and implement the strategies in the Plan.
- A vision statement that summarizes the most important outcomes that the community wants to see achieved through this Plan.
- Focused goals and strategies that are logical, targeted and timely with tasks identified and with a responsible party assigned.
- A statement of values that identifies the principles that leaders and stakeholders should use in determining strategies.
- Evidence of broad community participation, public input and buy-in.
- A description of the partners and the partnerships that led to the Plan.
- Persuasive format in a non-technical manner.
- Strategies intended to help produce, either directly or indirectly, improvements in the local and regional economy, with implementation strategies, fostering social and cultural vitality and adoption of broadband.

Multi-jurisdictional: More than one jurisdiction where jurisdiction refers to a unit of government or other entity with similar powers, such as a city, county, district, special purpose district, township, town, borough, parish, village, state, Indian tribe, etc.

Multi-sectoral: Intentional collaboration between two or more sectors (i.e., utility, health, housing, community services, etc.) to accomplish goals and achieve outcomes in communities and regions. Sector means stakeholders from areas such as business, health, education, and/or workforce; or from organization types such as public, private, non-profit, and/or philanthropy.

PART VIII. NOTICE TO APPLICANTS

The Federal Government is not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of this announcement. Only authorized Federal officials can bind the Federal Government to the expenditure of funds.

PART IX. NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at: **http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html**, and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of a complaint form, call, (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
   Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
   1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
   Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. E-mail at: **program.intake@usda.gov**.

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RURAL ECONOMIC PLACEMAKING INITIATIVE (RPIC)
FY2020 COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT
APPLICATION PACKAGE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Application Forms (in Grants.gov application package).
- ☐ Executive Summary (1-page maximum).
- ☐ Applicant Qualifications (1-2 pages).
- ☐ Key Personnel Qualifications (1-2 pages).
- ☐ Project Proposal (15-page maximum).
    - ☐ Project Background.
    - ☐ Project Objectives.
    - ☐ Project Methods.
    - ☐ Geographic Location or Project Areas. (include Region description)
    - ☐ Project Management (Applicants are required to include a Work Plan Chart that lists each major Task by Key Personnel involved, Time Period of the task, Substantial Involvement of Rural Development staff, Deliverables, and Budget associated with each task).
    - ☐ Performance Measures.
    - ☐ Graphics, References, Citations (Do not count against the 15-page maximum)
- ☐ Letters of Support (i.e. match requirement, additional resource commitment from partners, etc.).
- ☐ Budget Information (10-page maximum).
    - ☐ SF-424 Budget Form.
    - ☐ Detailed Budget Narrative (including indirect cost rate or indirect cost rate proposal).
- ☐ Certifications.
- ☐ Verification of Matching Funds.
- ☐ DUNS and SAM Registration.

EVALUATION CRITERIA SUMMARY

Criteria	**Points**
1. Soundness of Approach	**0 - 25 points**
a. Objectives	Up to 10 points
b. Proposal	Up to 10 points
c. Ability to provide TA	Up to 5 points
2. Partnerships	**0 -15 points**
a. Quantity of partnerships	Up to 10 points
b. Match/in-kind	Up to 5 points
3. Innovation	**0 – 20 points**
a. Unique, innovative engagement and planning methods	Up to 10 points
b. Field tested innovative methods/practices	Up to 10 points
4. Organizational Capacity/Qualifications	**0 - 20 points**
a. Knowledge/prior experience in placemaking	Up to 10 points
b. Key personnel/capacity of personnel	Up to 10 points
5. Work plan	**0 – 10 points**
a. Tasks	Up to 5 points
b. Locations of rural communities	Up to 5 points
6. Performance outcomes	**0 -10 points**
a. Measurable benchmarks	Up to 5points
b. Description of benchmarks/outcomes of previous planning	Up to 5 points
Optional Discretionary Points	**0 – 10 points**
Innovation Implementation Challenge – seed grants	Up to 10 points

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