

**APPLICATION FORM – PLANNING PROJECTS  
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
BIG SKY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TRUST FUND (BSTF)  
PLANNING PROJECTS**

*Please reference the Application Guidelines for a complete explanation of required application information.*

I. APPLICANT INFORMATION - CRDC/EDO/TRIBAL GOVERNMENT	
Name of Eligible Applicant	Montana Business Assistance Connection, Inc (MBAC)
Authorized Contract Signatory (Full Name & Title)	Brian Obert- Executive Director
Email Address of Contract Signatory	<a href="mailto:bobert@mbac.biz">bobert@mbac.biz</a>
Daily Contact Person (Name & Title)	James "Eric" Seidensticker – Program Manager
Address (Street, City and 9-Digit Zip Code)	225 Cruse Ave, Ste D Helena, MT 59601-5011
Phone Number	406-437-1510
Email Address	<a href="mailto:eseidensticker@mbac.biz">eseidensticker@mbac.biz</a>
Fax Number	406-447-1514

II. PROJECT SUMMARY INFORMATION	
Name of Project	Greater Helena Area – Workforce Assessment
Proposed Use of BSTF Funds: Eligible Activities Listed in Section II. C of the Application Guidelines	Matching funds for federal funds
Physical Address of the Project	225 Cruse Ave, Ste D Helena, MT 59601-5011
County	Lewis and Clark
Total Project Cost It is recommended that cost estimates be included with the application to document the cost of the proposed project.	\$51,000
Amount of BSTF Funds Requested The amount of BSTF Funds should not typically exceed \$26,250. \$25,000 for project assistance and up to \$1,250 (5%) for eligible administrative activities.	\$26,000
Type of Assistance Requested (Grant or Loan)	<b>Grant</b>
Total Cash Match As stated in Section V. Application Review of the Guidelines --matching funds are expected and will be considered when reviewing the merit of the application.	<b>\$25,000</b>
Name & Physical Address of Assisted Business (If Applicable)	MBAC 225 Cruse Ave, Ste D Helena, MT 59601-5011
Contact Person for the Assisted Business	James "Eric" Seidensticker
Phone number of Contact Person for the Assisted Business	406-437-8566
Email address of Contact Person for the Assisted Business	<a href="mailto:eseidensticker@mbac.biz">eseidensticker@mbac.biz</a>
NAICS code of Assisted Business (If Applicable)	541611

Total Number of New Jobs to be Created (if Applicable)	20-25
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**III. PARTNER ORGANIZATION(S) (IF APPLICABLE)**

*Local economic development organizations may be involved in implementing and administering a project if the eligible applicant agrees to such an arrangement. If a partner EDO will be involved in the project, please provide the information in this section.*

Organization	
Contact Person (Full Name & Title)	
Address (Street, City and 9-Digit Zip Code)	
Phone Number	
Email Address	
What are the partner organizations responsibilities relative to completing the proposed project?	

**IV. PROJECT**

*Please describe, in detail, the proposed project:*

The purpose of this project is to assess the current workforce in the greater Helena area, business needs via outreach, identifying indicators in the area, new opportunities for industry clustering, and a strategic plan for MBAC to implement with local partners. This area includes Helena, Lewis & Clark County, north part of Broadwater County, Townsend, the north part of Jefferson County and Boulder. Helena serves this tri-county area as the "hub" and the combined population of this area is around 75,000.

The idea of having a workforce assessment for the greater Helena area stems from the need to understand the current workforce and trends, business's needs, and the impact more industry clustering could have on the area. There is also a significant demand for job skills being taught at a younger age, so there is a consensus that the public schools in the area will be involved in this project as well.

After visiting with many partners, there is a significant need to have an assessment like this performed for this area. Helena is unique in the sense that it is the Capital of Montana which adds an extra layer of employment (i.e. state employment) and there are also many federal offices in Helena. This area also has a growing tech sector, aerospace presence, engineering firms (multiple disciplines), specialized manufacturing, and various other unique fields

*Please describe the Assisted Business:*

The Montana Business Assistance Connection (MBAC) is the economic development organization for most of the area previously mentioned. Although MBAC does not service Jefferson County, the north part of the county shares a close relationship with

Helena, Lewis & Clark County, and Broadwater County. MBAC has forged many close partnerships with local governments, businesses, non-profits, higher education institutions, and other entities. Since MBAC is directly involved with economic development and other ancillary initiatives, MBAC would like to be at the forefront of this assessment and implementing it.

*Please describe what activities the BSTF funds will be used for:*

BSTF funds will be used to hire a consultant for the creation and completion of a workforce assessment. BSTF funds will also be matched with U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) funds as MBAC will be applying for an EDA Technical Assistance Grant

*Identify the entities involved in completing the proposed project, including management of the project/staff plan:*

MBAC will be the lead agency for this project. However, MBAC will be closely working the City of Helena, Lewis & Clark County, City of Townsend, Broadwater County, Jefferson County (regarding the north part), Jefferson Local Development Corporation, Carroll College, Helena College, Helena Public Schools, Townsend Public Schools, Jefferson County Public Schools, Helena Job Service, Helena Chamber of Commerce, Broadwater County Development Corporation, United Way of Lewis and Clark County, and various other organizations.

The MBAC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee will also be involved with this project. The CEDS Committee is composed of public government officials and private sector representatives.

*Provide an Implementation Plan or Timeline for the proposed activities from start-up through closeout:*

Consulting with MBAC partners -- November/December 2016

Submit BSTF application -- December 2016

Submit EDA application -- March 2017

BSTF and EDA Funding Decisions -- April/May 2017

Hire Consultant -- May to June 2017

Commencement of Scope of Work -- May to June 2017

Completion of Scope of Work -- September to November 2017

Draft Work Force Assessment -- October to November 2017

Review of Draft Work Force Assessment -- November to December 2017

Final Draft Work Force Assessment -- December 2017 to January 2018

MBAC implementation -- February to March 2018

*Specify if outside profession services will be procured:*

Outside professional services will be procured.

*Please provide any relevant historic information on this project or the region it could support:*

There are various perspectives and challenges regarding the workforce in this area. For example, many believe that there is a shortage of qualified works in this area, thus leaving many positions unfilled. There are some that argue this area is not as appealing as neighboring areas in Montana (i.e. Bozeman or Missoula). There is a loose belief that there will be a mass exodus of state workers due to early retirement and this will leave a void in state government employment. Although these are just a few perspectives, there are numerous other points of view regarding the workforce in this area. This adds emphasis to the importance of having an assessment done and having its findings address some of these concerns.

#### V. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

*Please describe, in detail, the objectives of the project. (What are the objectives?)*

The main objectives of this project are to assess the current workforce in the greater Helena area, business needs via outreach, identifying indicators, identify new opportunities for industry clustering, and a strategic plan. All of these objectives will be used by MBAC to implement with its partners in the economic development field and ancillary fields.

#### VI. PROJECT DELIVERABLES

*Please describe, in detail, the deliverables of the project. Include a bulleted list detailing what will be delivered to the Department demonstrating objectives were met at the end of the project. (What are the deliverables?)*

Scope of Work and Project Deliverables:

1. Area Indicators & Factors: Providing overall economic context of the area. This will include utilizing existing data from the region, and gathering comparative data from similar regions in the U.S. This will help identify economic strategic goals of the community and identify risk factors.
2. Industry Clusters & Drivers: Identify several target clusters that will be a priority subject. These are clusters that are significant, have the greatest opportunity for growth, and have significant economic impact on the region.
3. Current Workforce Outline & Supply: An in-depth analysis of the existing labor force including a breakdown of sectors, historical trends, and projections. This will also include a more thorough analysis of the Government sector to determine unique skill sets.
4. Business Needs Outline & Workforce Demand: An analysis of skills required by industry sectors will include literary review, testimonials from stakeholders, and

interviews with human resource representatives and experiences of similar industries in other area.

5. Implementation Plan; A comprehensive strategy for MBAC to work with regional partners. This will include a spreadsheet of suggested actions items to be implemented over a period of time.

**VII. PROJECT ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT**

*Please provide a summary of the impacts (both positive and negative) the project would have on the state, regional and community economy.*

This proposed project would be a tool that MBAC foresees being used for at least the next ten years. MBAC would be able to use this as a tool, in conjunction with its partners to create more jobs in the area and help those in search of employment. MBAC believes that 20-25 jobs could be created in a short amount of time due to the number of partners MBAC works with. These partners are facing numerous issues when it comes to attracting, hiring, and retaining skilled employees. Presently, many of MBAC's partners are searching for immediate employees and this assessment could be used as a tool assist with filling this need immediately. This assessment would also be used to assist local businesses with finding quality workers that are a legitimate fit for their business. The education entities in the area would be partnered with to begin teaching job skills to younger individuals on the cusp of transitioning to the workforce. This assessment would also serve as a marketing tool for the area and highlight the strengths of the area to attract and retain new industries. These industries could include, but are not limited to engineering firms, specialized manufacturing, technology firms, new retail stores etc.

**VII. PROJECT SOURCES & USES OF FUNDS**

	SOURCE: BSTF	SOURCE: EDA Match	SOURCE:	SOURCE:	TOTAL PROJECT COST:
Administration (up to 8%, 750 min, \$2,000 max)	\$1,000				\$1,000
Professional Services	\$25,000	\$25,000			\$50,000
Other:					
<b>TOTAL PLANNING PROJECT</b>	\$26,000	\$25,000	\$	\$	\$51,000

***List cash and in-kind contributions separately.***

**BUDGET NARRATIVE**

*Provide a total project cost breakdown*

*Provide a narrative including the source, use, and status (ie. On hand, awarded, committed, applied for, etc.) for all funds to be utilized in satisfying the program matching funds requirement.*

*Provide a description with documentation that details how all project costs are verified, specifying how and by whom they are determined (i.e. who prepared the cost estimates, equipment lists, etc.) and describe that the cost estimates are reasonable and complete.*

The attached cost estimates range from \$53,000 - \$58,000. Pending funding decisions, MBAC will release a Request for Proposals (RFP) and the RFP will ask for proposals not to exceed \$50,000. MBAC staff will be assisting the selected consultant applicably to mitigate any costs over \$50,000. For example, design and printing is a significant expenditure if built into a scope of work. Actions like these can be handled by MBAC staff via internal funds. Scenarios like these have been internally discussed by MBAC staff to make sure that the project does not exceed \$50,000.

Provide a total project cost breakdown. List separately any cash and in-kind contributions to the project. Provide a narrative describing each cost line item listed above. This should include a description of each activity that will need to be undertaken in order to complete the project, the source of funding, the status of the funds, and the responsible entity. Include cost estimates and/or quotes for any professional services or vendors to be utilized and letters of commitment for entities providing matching funds.

Note: The Department will withhold ten percent (10%) of the total amount awarded until the Department verifies that all tasks outlined in the contract have been completed and approved by the Department.

VIII. CERTIFICATION BY CRDC, ELIGIBLE EDO, or TRIBAL GOVERNMENT

As the responsible authorized agent of Montana Business Assistance Connection, Inc (MBAC), I hereby submit this Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund Application, and will comply with all requirements set out in the BSTF program guidelines in the implementation of this project.

The information presented in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, true, complete and accurately represents the proposed project. I understand that additional information and documentation may be required. In addition, I understand that the applicant and the assisted business receiving BSTF financial assistance are liable for the full amount of the award that is advanced by the Department if the assisted business: misrepresents itself or its claims, fails to inject the required amount of match into the project as specified in the executed contract. I understand that additional information and documentation may be required.

MBAC will accept responsibility for management of the project and compliance with Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund regulations, and is the authorized contact for the release of additional information and/or documentation regarding this application.

Name  
(typed): James Eric Seidensticker  
Title (typed): Program Manager  
Authorized Representative

Signature: X   
Date: 12/28/2016