FY 2028 Community Development Fund Evaluation Criteria
Track 2: Economic Development Grants

Community Needs and Program Design: Max 25 Points						
Criteria	**Definition**	**1 (Poor)**	**2 (Fair)**	**3 (Good)**	**4 (Very Good)**	**5 (Excellent)**
Community Need	Is the need for services for LMI entrepreneurs clearly defined and supported? Are barriers to economic participation identified? Is there a clear link between need, population, and proposed services?	No clear need identified for entrepreneurs or businesses. Lacks relevant data. Population is unclear.	General need identified but lacks clarity or local relevance. Limited data or weak connection to population.	Adequate description of need with some supporting examples or data. General connection to LMI entrepreneurs.	Strong description of need with multiple data points or examples. Clear identification of barriers and population.	Compelling, well-supported need with strong local data and/or experience. Clearly identifies key economic barriers and shows strong alignment between need, population, and services.
Program Design Overview	Does the program provide a clear and effective technical assistance model? Are services appropriate and tailored to the needs of LMI entrepreneurs? Are delivery methods and partnerships well-defined?	Program model is unclear or not described. Activities are disconnected from need.	Basic description of services provided but lacks detail or alignment to need. Limited explanation of delivery approach.	Program design is clear with defined services and general alignment to need. Delivery approach is described.	Strong, well-defined model with appropriate services tailored to entrepreneurs. Delivery methods and partnerships are clearly described.	Comprehensive and strategic technical assistance model. Services are well-tailored, integrated, and clearly aligned with identified need. Demonstrates strong understanding of what supports LMI entrepreneurs effectively.
Target Beneficiaries	Is the target population of entrepreneurs or businesses clearly defined? Are outreach, eligibility, and engagement strategies appropriate?	Target population unclear. No detail on outreach, eligibility, or engagement.	Basic description of population but limited detail on demographics, outreach, or eligibility.	Target population defined with general outreach and eligibility approach described.	Strong understanding of target population with clear outreach, recruitment, and LMI verification approach.	Clear, detailed, and well-justified target population. Outreach and engagement strategies are strong, tailored, and likely to successfully reach LMI entrepreneurs.
Geography	Is the service area clearly defined and appropriate for the proposed program?	No geographic focus described.	General service area identified with limited detail or relevance.	Service area described with some explanation.	Clear and relevant geographic focus aligned with need and population.	Strong, well-justified service area with clear connection to need, access, and target population.
Work Plan and Readiness	Does the work plan demonstrate a clear, feasible timeline to implement the program? Does the response indicate that there is project readiness?	Work plan is missing or incomplete.	Timeline or activities are unclear or unrealistic.	Work plan is complete with general sequencing of activities.	Tasks are clearly organized with realistic timelines.	Detailed, well-structured work plan demonstrating strong readiness and clear implementation strategy.

Organizational Capacity and Experience: Max 10 Points

Criteria	Definition	1 (Poor)	2 (Fair)	3 (Good)	4 (Very Good)	5 (Excellent)
Organizational Capacity	Does the organization demonstrate experience delivering economic development, workforce, or business support programs? Are staff and partners qualified?	No relevant experience. Roles and expertise unclear.	Limited experience. Staff roles or qualifications unclear.	Relevant experience is described with basic staff qualifications. Partner roles are understood (if applicable)	Strong relevant experience; clearly qualified team and well-defined partner roles (if applicable).	Extensive experience delivering economic development or business support programs. Highly qualified team with strong alignment to proposed activities.
Financial & Administrative Capacity	Are grant management systems described? Does the applicant explain how clients are tracked and verified for beneficiary eligibility? Are internal controls or tools in place?	Financial and administrative systems not addressed or appear inadequate.	Systems described in vague or incomplete terms.	Basic but adequate systems for tracking costs, eligibility, and records are described.	Clear, reliable systems are in place for financial management, compliance, and eligibility verification.	Strong, reliable systems in place; demonstrates strong compliance capacity and track record. There appears to be a strong capacity to manage grants and complete required reporting.

Program Evaluation: Max 15 Points

Criteria	Definition	1 (Poor)	2 (Fair)	3 (Good)	4 (Very Good)	5 (Excellent)
Program Goals	Are the goals SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound)? Are they clearly linked to the program's economic development activities and intended outcomes for LMI entrepreneurs or job seekers?	Goals not provided or are unrelated to the economic development program.	Goals are vague, not measurable, or not clearly tied to economic outcomes or activities.	Goals are clearly stated and generally relevant to the program and target population.	Goals are specific, measurable, and tied to intended economic outcomes (e.g., employment, income, business support).	Well-developed SMART goals that are strategic, clearly aligned with economic mobility outcomes, and demonstrate meaningful potential impact for low- and moderate-income participants or businesses.
Program Outputs	Are outputs clearly described and realistic? Do they logically result from economic development activities (e.g., training, technical assistance)? Are they measurable, and are data collection tools and timing described?	Outputs missing or not measurable.	Outputs are generic or not tied to program activities. Data collection methods vague or unclear.	Clear, realistic outputs linked to economic development activities (e.g., number of participants, workshops, assistance hours). Basic tracking tools are described.	Outputs are well-defined, specific, and measurable. Clearly reflect level and scale of service delivery, with tracking methods and frequency explained.	Outputs are clear, realistic, and well-structured, demonstrating strong alignment with program implementation and expected participant reach and level of service.
Program Outcomes	Are outcomes clearly defined and achievable? Do outcomes reflect meaningful economic or employment-related benefits for low- and moderate-income participants or businesses? Are tools and timing for tracking described?	No outcomes identified or outcomes are too vague.	Outcomes are general or weakly connected to program activities. Limited focus on economic impact.	Outcomes are realistic and generally linked to activities and outputs. Some indication of economic benefit.	Outcomes are well-aligned with program goals and clearly reflect measurable economic benefits (e.g., income growth, job placement, business progress). Tracking methods are realistic and described.	Outcomes are compelling, specific, and measurable, and directly tied to meaningful economic advancement for LMI entrepreneurs (e.g., increased earnings, business growth, access to capital, employment stability). Tracking approach is clear, practical, and well-aligned.

Budget: Max 5 points

Criteria	Definition	1 (Poor)	2 (Fair)	3 (Good)	4 (Very Good)	5 (Excellent)
Budget	Is the budget reasonable, complete, and aligned with the proposed economic development program? Are costs appropriate for delivering technical assistance, training, and support services to low- and moderate-income entrepreneurs? Is the use of funds clearly explained, including personnel, service delivery, and any partnerships?	Budget is missing, inconsistent, or not aligned with the proposed program. No explanation of costs or how funds will be used.	Budget is unclear or poorly aligned with program activities. Narrative provides limited or vague explanation of key costs (e.g., staffing, training, or technical assistance).	Budget generally aligns with program activities such as training and technical assistance. Narrative explains major costs, but some assumptions may lack clarity.	Budget is clear, reasonable, and well-aligned with program design. Narrative adequately explains staffing, service delivery costs, and how funds support participant services.	Budget is detailed, realistic, and fully aligned with the proposed program. Costs clearly support delivery of economic development services (e.g., staffing, technical assistance, partnerships). Narrative provides strong justification, including assumptions, allocation of funds, and coordination with other funding sources.

Leverage Score: Max 5 points

Criteria	Definition	1 (Poor)	2 (Fair)	3 (Good)	4 (Very Good)	5 (Excellent)
Leverage Score	Percent of Program Budget Funded By Sources Other than CD Fund. Formula is calculated by Community Development staff and applied to final score.	0 to 19% of budget leveraged through other sources.	20.0 to 39% of budget leveraged through other sources.	40.0 to 59% of budget leveraged through other sources.	60.0 to 79% of budget leveraged through other sources.	80.0 to 100% of budget leveraged through other sources.

Scoring Rubric

Score:		**Possible Score**
	Community Needs and Program Design	25
	Organizational Capacity and Experience	10
	Program Evaluation	15
	Budget	5
	Leverage Score	5
	TOTAL POSSIBLE	**60**