

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY

OneGeorgia Authority

Equity Program – Rural Site Development Initiative

September 13, 2024

OneGeorgia Authority (hereinafter, the “OneGeorgia or the “Authority”) releases this Notice of Funding Availability (the “NOFA”) for the Rural Site Development Initiative. Funding will be made available to assist local communities with support to develop sites critical to economic development across Georgia.

The purpose of this NOFA is to outline available financial assistance, in the form of grants, for activities that result in developing industrial sites that meet the needs of companies that are locating to rural Georgia. In order to remain competitive in economic development, sites across Georgia must be continuously identified, assessed, and developed. This initiative will provide a small amount of state funding, matched at various levels depending on the community’s OneGeorgia eligibility determination, for a minimum of fifty (50) contiguous acre sites. Projects will be awarded funds on a competitive basis to sites that demonstrate an ability to address:

- Lack of available industrial sites for recruitment and retention of employment opportunities;
- The difficulty of satisfying project sites in communities or regions with high unemployment; or
- A community or regional commitment to expand and improve existing sites.

This initiative is intended to provide a flexible funding source to support any eligible activity that results in rural site development. Examples of such activities include, but are not limited to, site studies, grading of land, and essential community infrastructure specifically needed to support site development.

Grantees will be expected to demonstrate transformational change in rural site development. OneGeorgia funds are offered to support site development; therefore, resulting in the increase of available development ready sites in rural Georgia.

A copy of this NOFA, the Application package, and other related materials will be available on the Department of Community Affairs’ website at the link listed below:

<https://www.dca.ga.gov/community-economic-development/funding-programs/onegeorgia-authority>

A. FUNDS AVAILABLE

The Amended Fiscal Year 2024 Budget includes approximately twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000) for this initiative. This funding will be awarded at regular semi-annual intervals through an ongoing, competitive grant cycle, subject to funding availability. The amount of funds available may be increased or decreased at the Authority’s discretion.

B. GRANT FUNDING LIMITATIONS

Studies for due diligence on site development are limited to no more than two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000). Site Improvement grants are limited to no more than two million dollars (\$2,000,000) per application and development. The Authority reserves the right to fund, in whole or in part, any, all, or none of the applications submitted in response to this NOFA. Applications for less than seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) will not be accepted; however, the Authority reserves the

ability to waive minimum and maximum funding limits at its discretion. The Authority will only approve one investment per site location per year.

C. MATCHING FUNDS REQUIREMENT

Applications are expected to leverage other sources of funding – private debt or equity, philanthropic support, or other public funds. Applicants located in an OneGeorgia “Eligible” community, should generally contribute a ten percent (10%) match to the amount of grant funds requested. Applicants located in an OneGeorgia “Conditionally Eligible” community, should contribute at a minimum twenty five percent (25%) match to the amount of grant funds requested. Communities located in an OneGeorgia “Non-eligible” county are not allowed to apply or receive grant funds. Local public and private investment will factor into an application’s overall competitiveness.

D. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Units of general-purpose local government (e.g., city, county, consolidated government), as well as local, regional, and state authorities, are eligible to apply. Prospective applicants should consult the Authority with questions about eligibility.

Additional eligibility requirements include the following:

- Applicants should notify Bob Kosek, Division Director of Global Commerce at the Georgia Department of Economic Development, to hold an initial meeting.
- Applicants may only submit applications for activities within OneGeorgia eligible and conditionally eligible counties. For purposes of this initiative, both eligible and conditionally eligible counties are considered eligible.
- Local government/authority applicants must be in compliance with the audit report and grant certification form submission requirements contained in O.C.G.A. 36-81-7 and 86-81-8.1.
- Local government and authority applicants must be current and in compliance with all reporting, audit, and survey requirements, as required by statute.
- Prior recipients of OneGeorgia funding must resolve any outstanding audit and/or compliance monitoring findings or deficiencies prior to submitting an application. Sanctions associated with any other OneGeorgia grant will also apply to this initiative.

E. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

This initiative is intended to provide flexible funding to support the development of rural industrial sites. Any OneGeorgia eligible activity will be considered for funding, subject to the following overarching objectives.

- 1) Any infrastructure/construction costs that include, but are not limited to, the following activities are eligible to receive funding through this initiative: grading, clearing, grubbing, infrastructure development, road improvements, accel/decel lanes, engineering, purchase of adjacent or expansion property, easements, and due diligence studies.

- 2) Sites must be publicly owned at the time of the application submission. Site must be a minimum of fifty (50) contiguous acres. If the site is not publicly owned, it must be under option by a development authority for three (3) years prior to grant being awarded.
- 3) The site applying for Site Improvement Grants must commit to GRAD certification process within one year.
- 4) Sale or lease activities not compliant with the parameters set forth under this NOFA are subject to penalties that will be addressed in the award documentation.
- 5) Developments must comply with state environmental and historic preservation requirements.

F. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

- Applicants should notify Bob Kosek, Division Director of Global Commerce at the Georgia Department of Economic Development, to hold an initial meeting.
- Each completed application will first be reviewed to reconfirm eligibility and determine completeness. Then, applications will be thoroughly vetted and competitively scored.
- The Authority will consider recommended applications and make a final determination on any and all awards.

G. APPLICATION DEADLINES AND AWARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

For funding requests, applications must be submitted online. The link to access the application will be provided by program staff after staff determines eligibility. (Hard copy applications will not be accepted.)

Fiscal Year 2025 submission deadlines are as follows:

- October 11, 2024, for December/January award announcement
- March 28, 2025, for June/July award announcement

Successful applicants will receive written notice of award, including all necessary grant or loan documents, requirements, timelines, and other details.

H. TIMEFRAME FOR COMPLETION

OneGeorgia funds must be expended within the timeframe specified in the grant/loan award documentation, which is generally two years from the date of the award. For purposes of the Authority, "completion" is defined as 1) all activities for which funds were received are complete, 2) all awarded funding has been expended, and 3) all award close-out procedures have been finalized.

I. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Authority is the administrator of the Rural Site Development Initiative. This initiative is subject to funding availability, and the Authority reserves its right to amend the initiative at any time. Use of funds is subject to all applicable state laws and regulations, as well as to the policies and requirements

of the Department of Community Affairs and OneGeorgia Equity program.

For additional information, please contact Bob Kosek, Division Director of Global Commerce for the Georgia Department of Economic Development, at bkosek@georgia.org.