

FAQ's for BRI Grant.

See <https://bentonbri.com/grant-faqs/> for more details

What are the eligibility requirements for this BRI grant?

- Must be an active business or nonprofit (Nonprofits are eligible to receive funding if they have a primary business activity that is similar to the eligible businesses who qualify for this program)
- Must have a valid government issued photo identification (ID)
- **Must have less than 51 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees**
- **Have not reported annual gross income of more than \$5,000,000 in calendar year 2019**
- **Headquarters or main office physically located in Benton County where a majority of employees are assigned**
- **Business must be independently owned and operated (Independently owned and operated means that the ownership interests, management, and operation of the business are not subject to control, restriction, modification, or limitation by a person or corporation with no formal role in the operation of the business)**
- Valid and current state and/or local business license as required by law
- **No pending compliance or regulatory issues with state or federal agencies, as of March 1, 2020.**
- **Must provide financial documentation to validate business income**
 - **2019 Federal Tax Return (if business was open in 2019)**
 - **2020 Federal Tax Return**
 - **2021 Federal Tax Return (or four quarterly Department of Revenue filings)**
 - **Accounting records (bank statements) for the 12 months immediately preceding the date of application showing revenue in prior months, payroll expenses, rent payments, and utility expenses**

What would make my business ineligible for a BRI grant?

- Disbarment, or current compliance/regulatory issues with state or federal agencies, as of March 1, 2020.
- Actively pursuing a bankruptcy declaration or actively engaged in current/pending lawsuits.
- Ineligible business categories:
 - Marijuana/cannabis operation
 - Government entity or elected official offices
 - Passive business, investment companies and investors who file a Schedule E on their personal tax returns
 - Financial Businesses primarily engaged in the business of lending
 - Businesses engaged in socially undesirable activity or activity that may be considered predatory in nature
 - Businesses of a prurient/sexual nature
 - Businesses primarily engaged in political or lobbying activities
 - Businesses that restrict patronage for any reason other than capacity or age, due to regulations

If my business is not awarded funding in Phase One, can I apply for Phase Two and/or Phase Three?

Businesses that do not receive a grant award in Phase One are eligible for potential funding in subsequent phases. No need to reapply – your application will automatically roll over to the next phase.

If my business is applying for other grants or loans, can I still apply for this grant?

Yes. An active application with another organization will not affect eligibility for BRI grant funds. However, all funds (loan and/or grant) received between March 2020 and the date you submit your BRI application must be disclosed.

What is the timeframe for each of the 3 Phases?

- **Phase One: October 2022 – January 2023**
- **Phase Two: February 2023 – May 2023**
- **Phase Three: June 2023 – September 2023**

What is the timeline for processing applications?

The time applications open to the time funds are awarded is approximately 10-12 weeks.

- Month one: Applications open
- Month two: Applications processed
- Month three: Funds awarded
- Month four: Awardee expenditure verification

How long will I have to apply once the application opens?

- Phase One: The BRI grant application will open on October 1, 2022 and close at midnight on October 31, 2022.
- Phase Two: The BRI grant application will open on February 1, 2023 and close at midnight on February 28, 2023.
- Phase Three: The BRI grant application will open on September 1, 2023 and close at midnight on September 30, 2023.

How much money is being awarded in each Phase?

Up to one million dollars is awarded in each Phase.

Who decides what businesses receive grant funds?

Applications are reviewed (based on American Rescue Plan Act and Benton County requirements) by the Evaluation Panel – a diverse panel of local community and business leaders. Grant awards are based on greatest need.

What is the maximum possible award possible for any one business?

Grants range from \$3,000 to \$30,000. A maximum grant award will not exceed 6-10% of the applicant's annual business revenue. Businesses are not eligible for more than one BRI award.

How is the full-time employee equivalent (FTE) determined?

A full-time employee equals one FTE. A part time employee is 0.5 FTE if their hours equal half the hours of a full-time employee.

What can I do to expedite the review process?

Ensure your application is complete, correct and all relevant documents have been uploaded/submitted.

Is it better to apply online or fill out the paper copy?

All applications are scored using the same metrics regardless of whether it is submitted online or on paper. However, it may be easier and faster for many businesses to apply online. Applications are reviewed and evaluated in the order they are received.

Where does the funding come from?

The \$3 million Benton County BRI grant comes from the federal government via the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, which was appropriated as part of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to Benton County. The Benton County Commissioners allocated \$3 million of the SLFR funds to help Benton County small businesses build a resilient and successful future.

Does the business owner need to attest to the certifications and sign the application or can the business manager/accountant use their own name?

The business owner or representative who is authorized to enter into legally binding agreements for the applicant may attest and sign the application.

Do I need a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number (formerly DUNS number) to apply for this grant?

No. You may apply for this grant without a UEI, but cannot receive funds (if awarded) until you have one. If you don't have one yet, apply here:

<https://sam.gov/content/duns-uei>

Can I request an edit on my application?

If your application has been submitted, it is no longer editable. However, you can “withdraw” your application and resubmit a new application which will not affect your eligibility or count against you in any way.

What kind of reporting will be required as a recipient of these funds?

Each awardee must complete a questionnaire within 60 days of receiving grant funds.

If awarded, what can I use the money for?

Awardees must use the grant funds for one or more of the following options:

Option #1: Workforce Development

- Up to two weeks of payroll for on-the-job training of new employees.
- External training and/or certifications for new or existing employees.

Option #2: Work Incentives (Bonuses)

- Funding may be used for new employee bonuses up to \$1,200 per new employee
- Bonus recipients will only receive bonus upon completion of at least 12 paid weeks of work (20 hours per week minimum)
- Bonuses paid through employer

Option #3: Rent and/or Utilities Assistance

- Funds may be used for up to six months rent and/or utilities

Option #4: Digital Transformation

- Funding may be used to establish an online presence, digital sales platform, and/or utilize digital technologies to create new (or modifying existing) business processes and customer experiences

Option #5: *Outdoor Space Enhancement

- Storefront and façade improvements
- ***This option is only available if your business is in a 2022 QCT area:**
[https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sadda/sadda_qct.html?locate=\\$fips\\$](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sadda/sadda_qct.html?locate=$fips$)

Who do I contact if I have questions or need assistance with an application?

Email info@tricityregionalchamber.com or call the Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce at [509-736-0510](tel:509-736-0510). Emails and voicemail responses provided within 8 business hours.