

## **Saline County Economic Grant Program Overview Background Document**

**Program Description:** In 2017, Saline County voters approved a one-half cent sales tax to be collected on eligible retail sales. A portion of these funds may be made available to five communities selected within the county to support projects deemed by the local governmental authority to have economic development potential. Arrow Rock is one of those five communities. There is no assurance that these funds will be available in any given year, as certain county level projects will have precedence over local initiatives.

The Saline County Commission has delegated authority to distribute any allocated funds designated for Arrow Rock to its Town Board of Trustees. In an effort to distribute funds in a fair, equitable and productive manner, the Trustees created a committee, known as the “Arrow Rock Improvement Committee” (ARIC) to advise Trustees in their effort to distribute funds. ARIC will:

- Solicit applications
- Review requests for support
- Prioritize requests based on the expected disbursement of funds
- Make recommendations to the Arrow Rock Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees reviews ARIC recommendations and submits those selected to the Saline County Commission, which has the ultimate authority to approve projects.

As originally conceived by the County, funding assistance may be provided through:

- Grants
- Loans

Funding for business retention is NOT precluded; however, a strong preference will be funding activities that create new or incremental economic benefit. Operating costs are generally not eligible unless they are tied specifically to business retention.

For-profit, not-for-profit, and “special purpose entities” may apply. Special consideration may be given to entities that are able to leverage funds via matching grants or other collaborative agreements with public or private sources.

**Funding Priorities:** Long-term economic benefit of initiatives will be a primary consideration and will generally be related to the ability to build on existing assets. Programs and projects that enhance the historic and cultural legacy of the town will receive special consideration.

**Purposes:** Completed projects/initiatives will promote economic development and enhance the economic viability of Arrow Rock. Funding will be awarded to projects that develop and support a variety of initiatives, including:

- Programs
- Facilities
- Infrastructure
- Historic and cultural enhancement

**Metrics:** Applications should include projected increase of visitors, other expected impact and the duration of the affect. Metrics are often thought of in three ways:

- 1) **Process measures:** How many people attended an event or utilized a funded project? These are outcomes that are quantifiable/measurable and usually measurable in a defined time frame.
- 2) **Quality measures:** Were those who planned or presented at the event pleased with their efforts? These are outcomes that measure attitudes and responses to a program or project. They are not quantifiable but are also measured in a specific time frame.
- 3) **Outcome measures:** Did local sales increase? Did participants change attitudes? Outcome measures are very important, but they are the difficult to capture and usually take a long period of time – likely to exceed the funding period.

**Feasibility:** Projects will be evaluated to ascertain, in the view of the ARIC and the Town Board, the ability of the applicant to complete the project as described. The applicant should have the capacity to complete the project. Timelines and budgets should be specific and realistic.

**Funding Timeframe:** Multi-year projects may be considered; however, in that funding year-to-year is not certain and will be determined outside the control of ARIC and the Board of Trustees, they are not preferred. Applicants should be aware that funding is only assured for the first year of the specific request.

Funds not spent during the award distribution period will be forgone by the applicant unless there a special circumstances are reviewed and approved by the Town Board.

**Funding Cycle Key Dates:**

- **January** – ARIC publishes Request for Proposals
- **March 31<sup>st</sup>** - Grant application submission: Fully completed applications, including letters of support and cooperation, must be received by ARIC electronically by March 31<sup>st</sup> of the year PRIOR to the award distribution period.
- **April 1<sup>st</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>** - Application review and scoring by ARIC: April 1st through August 31<sup>st</sup> of the year PRIOR to the award distribution period.
- **First Monday of September** - Town Board review of ARIC's recommendations: at the Board's September board meeting on the first Monday of September.
- **October** - Saline County Sales Tax Board reviews recommendations forward by the Arrow Rock Town Board and gives final approval: at their October meeting
- **November 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>** - Announcement of Awards: November 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year PRIOR to the award distribution period

- ***January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup> - Funding Period:*** January 1st through December 31<sup>st</sup> of the Award Distribution Period.

Example: In January 2022, an applicant submits a \$10,000 request to support a vehicle changing station to be established in 2023. ARIC must receive the application electronically on or before March 31, 2022. The application is reviewed by ARIC which recommends to the Town Board an award of \$8,000. In September 2022, the Board reviews and approves ARIC's recommendation. In October 22, the Town Board presents its request for funds to the Saline County Sales Tax Board. It is approved, and from November 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup> the applicant receives notice that their request has been approved and a standard grant agreement is issued.

**Funds are not disbursed at the time the grant agreement is completed.**

Disbursement of funds is triggered by submission of receipts and/or invoices to the Town Secretary. Funds should be expended within the timeline approved by ARIC and the Town Board unless there are extenuating circumstances. In such situations, the Town Board must consider and approve an extension. The Town Board will notify ARIC of such arrangements.

**TO APPLY FOR THESE RESOURCES, GO ONLINE TO [arrowrock.org/residents](http://arrowrock.org/residents), REVIEW THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS AND COMPLETE THE FORM FOLLOWING IT.**

