Now Accepting Applications

Applications Due April 27th | Program Launch June 1, 2020
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LAUNCHING GRO 3.0

Growth In The Rural Ozarks (GRO) program was launched in 2016 and expanded in 2018. Currently there are 5 communities (Aurora, Buffalo, Marshfield, Salem, Sarcoxie). The program is focused on helping communities design and launch a community and economic development plan that can begin help bring prosperity into the communities. In 2020, the program will be expanding to include 10 new communities.

Why GRO?
- Does it feel like your town’s best days are behind you?
- Are you aspiring to bring good jobs back to your community?
- Would you like to welcome people back home to your town?
- Are you frustrated with blight and disrepair that you see in your town?
- Are you tired of conversations that don’t translate to actions and outcomes?
- Are you seeking ways to get local leaders to row in the same direction?

Background

Community Selection Criteria:
1. Dedicated and diverse local leadership
2. A strong community commitment
3. An acute local need
4. Track history and proven history to accomplish goals
5. Commitment to support the broader GRO program

Core Program Elements

- Business Growth
  - Grow local businesses.

- People Development
  - Nurture local workforce and leaders.

- Infrastructure & Placemaking
  - Improve the physical vibrancy of the community.

- Community Engagement
  - Create a more engaged and committed citizenry.

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

(1) What is the duration and cost of the program?
The program requires a 3-year commitment and a total financial cost of $30,000. The cost of the program will be broken down as follows: Year 1: $15,000; Year 2: $10,000; Year 3: $5,000. At least 20% of the costs must by matched by the local CFO Affiliate.

(2) What value and outcomes can we expect from the program?
Your community will receive support in the following 6 categories:
• A comprehensive local community assessment and prioritize action items
• Program management, coordination and communication tools.
• Access to GRO tools, programs, technology (example: Business attraction, Business retention and growth, Poverty Alleviation: Project RISE, Leadership program, Business911 platform, Business speaker series, etc.)
• Hands-on expert coaching and guidance.
• Access to GRO community leaders, experts, community forums
• Technology tools (Website and mobile application) to help engage community and manage the program.
• Annual federal grant prioritization, grant writing and management.
• Marketing materials and expertise to drive local community engagement

(3) How will we measure the impact of our work?
The effort will focus on moving a combination of the following metrics:
• Number of businesses in the community
• Number of open commercial and retail spaces in town
• Average household income
• Population size
• Population with certifications and degrees
• Local poverty rate
• Asset base of local foundation (measure of community engagement)
• Local tax base (sales, property, bed)
• Average household property value
• Number of people actively (>5 hours/month) engaged in community development
• Community confidence and enthusiasm

(4) What is the selection criteria to quality for the program?
(i) Most critical element of the selection criteria is a local committed and cohesive leadership team that is willing to spend time, energy and resources to help improve their local community. (ii) Become actively engaged in the GRO cross-community programming and help the fellow communities succeed.

(5) Is there a sample schedule of programming?
There is a base programming calendar. This curriculum will be customized based on each community’s local assessment.

(6) Important dates to note.
• February 14th: Letter of interest due to participate in the program and launch
• February 21st: Launch local Community Confidence Survey
• March 20th: Conclude community confidence survey data collection
• April 6th: GRO team to send out results of the community confidence survey
• April 27th: GRO Program applications due
• May 15th: Community interviews concluded, and winners announced
• June 1st: GRO 3.0 Program launch

Open Community Call
9-10am CST
Friday January 17, 2020
Friday January 24, 2020
Conference Call Details:
https://zoom.us/j/4638592307
OR
929-436-2866; Code: 4638592307