

Question and Answer: CREATE BRIDGES Informational Webinar May 20, 2020

1. Who serves on the final selection committee?

*Answer: The applications are reviewed by the State Coaching Team. Members of the State Coaching Team are listed on the second slide in the Informational Meeting slidedeck. Two regions will be recommended by the State Coaching Team to the National Team on August 14, 2020. The National Team will pick the one region in North Carolina that the State Coaching Team will work with. That decision will be made by September 1 in consultation with the State Coaching Team. The National Team will be comprised of representatives from the Southern Rural Development Center and the 3 phase 1 coaching teams (University of Arkansas Extension, Oklahoma State Extension, and University of Kentucky Extension).*

2. Who is considered an “active partner.”

*Answer: An active partner will be a member of the Regional Steering Committee who has committed to the 2 ½ year CREATE BRIDGES process. An active partner is different from a community member who occasionally contributes to the process. We are expecting a written commitment from the active partners.*

3. Please define “region.” Are regions already decided?

*Answer: A region consists of two to five contiguous counties. A region is not limited to Council of Government Regions, Extension Districts, Prosperity Zones, etc. It can be any region that consists of a minimum of two and a maximum of five contiguous counties.*

So the selection of the region is decided by the counties themselves?

*Answer: Yes.*

4. Agriculture and farming are the primary businesses that drive rural economies, at least in terms of generating revenue. Would individual farmers be considered stakeholders?

*Answer: Farmers who engage in direct to consumer sales or agritourism would be considered a CREATE business (retail or tourism). They would be considered stakeholders in the CREATE BRIDGES process.*

In eastern NC, the large pork and poultry processors are the big businesses that contract with farmers, would they be stakeholders that we can approach?

*Answer: Large meat processors do not engage in typical retail, accommodation, tourism, or entertainment business, so they would not be considered stakeholders in the CREATE BRIDGES process.*

5. What kind of funding in Year 3 will be available to the awardee and is there a match?

*Answer: There is up to \$100,000 available to support the strategies identified by community stakeholders to strengthen the CREATE businesses. There is no match requirement.*

6. Do you consider the arts and culture sector as part of “entertainment”?

*Answer: Yes.*

7. Is there a restriction on the type of entity that funding is released to? Government, nonprofit . .  
*Answer: We have not yet been advised about that question, but I would venture a guess that the entity to which the award will be given would either need to be a government entity or a 501c3 nonprofit.*
8. Is there a regional population cap on applications?  
*Answer: There is no population cap, but there is the requirement that the regional population be 51% rural.*
9. Is the county by county economic tier system enough to show a county's economic distress level?  
*Answer: While the NC economic tier system is evidence of distress levels, you still must meet the eligibility requirements specified in the data link on the SRDC web site*
10. It looks like the BRE Plan is the primary output. Is that true?  
*Answer: The BRE process is one step in the CREATE BRIDGES analysis. The regional economic recovery plan for CREATE businesses is the primary output.*
11. Did I see where \$250,000 + \$100,000 would be available? But, you are saying the selected region will only receive \$100,000 in Year 3. Is that correct?  
*Answer: You will be receiving \$250,000 in technical assistance from the State Coaching Team over the 2 ½ year period. You will be receiving \$100,000 in cash to support the implementation of strategies designed to strengthen the CREATE businesses.*
12. Would you please give an example of a successful strategy?  
*Answer: Walmart will approve the strategies identified by the region. A possible successful strategy could possibly include workforce development trainings to strengthen CREATE employee capacity. Another could possibly be a robust buy local campaign. However, I must stress that Walmart will approve the strategies, and the State Coaching Team is still receiving feedback on what this process entails.*
13. Can some of the \$100,000 for year three be used for administrative purposes?  
*Answer: We will have to get back to you on that.*
14. So, connecting to COVID-19 impacts is perfectly acceptable.  
*Answer: You must meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the data link on the SRDC web site:*  
[http://srdc.msstate.edu/createbridges/data\\_resources.html](http://srdc.msstate.edu/createbridges/data_resources.html)  
*Your region must have a poverty rate or unemployment rate higher than NC's average. As shown in the data link.*
15. When we registered for this webinar, there were 2-5 county regions defined that we were asked to select from. If I understand correctly, those are not predefined regions the contiguous counties must fall in?  
*Answer: That is correct. Your region does not have to be a COG region.*
16. What are some examples of how the \$100,000 can be spent?

*Answer: Walmart will make that determination. However, an example is for the payment of incentives to displaced or underemployed workers to attend workforce trainings.*

17. Who will provide the technical assistance in Years 1 and 2?

*Answer: The State Coaching Team*

18. Is the team willing to review a draft proposal before final submission and provide feedback?

*Answer: Yes.*

19. My county is 76% urban. Is there any limit on partners % of urban population?

*Answer: The urban/rural population percentages of each county in the region will be averaged. So long as the average for the region is 51% or more rural, the region will be eligible.*