



Questions and Answers from the America's Best Communities (ABC) Webinar on October 29, 2014

The following represent questions submitted by participants to the America's Best Communities Webinar that took place on Wednesday, October 29, 2014:

Q: Can a Farmer's Market count as a business that benefits?

A: Yes, a farmer's market can be considered a business that benefits from your submitted plan.

Q: Our Visitors Bureau is a 501 (c)6 NOT a 501 (c)3... nonprofit but not charitable. Would that be an allowable lead applicant?

A: Any non-profit can apply, provided that they have non-profit status approved by the United States Internal Revenue Service (for example, as a 501 c3 or c6).

Q: Are the judges/reviewers familiar with the Community Tool Kit?

A: The judges will be aware of the Community Toolkit but will bring their own expertise on economic revitalization, which will be used for the scoring of the competition in the categories listed under each round in the ABC Official Rules.

Q: Are you looking to give a kick-start to communities that may be struggling? OR awarding small communities that are already doing well? Slightly different approach but may guide our thoughts.

A: The competition seeks communities that best demonstrate vision and commitment to its future growth and sustainability. As such, all communities meeting the eligibility criteria are welcome to participate in the contest.

Q: Are we better off highlighting activities that are already well underway to address issues in the community or things that we are just starting or even considering starting?

A: Both projects that are under way or just starting will be considered in your community's revitalization plan, provided that they demonstrate a vision and commitment to its future growth and sustainability.

Q: Are you looking for one specific idea or are you trying to get a broad idea of the community as a whole and their ability to develop their community/economy through multiple venues?

A: Your team decides on what to include in your community's revitalization plan and how broad or narrow



your projects and vision should be.

Q: Where exactly in the application are we supposed to outline the project(s)? It seems like it is only asking for what we have already done or been doing but never asks for a specific project.

A: Question #12, under the "Economic Development" section on the application form asks, "Outline up to ten (10) additional or future initiatives that are needed to attract, retain and grow the local infrastructure or population." This is your opportunity to use 500 words to address the project(s) you plan to develop.

Q: Are you as administrator familiar with consultants who have offered to assist in completing applications?

A: While we are aware that your team may wish to enlist the assistance of consultants to help develop your community revitalization plan, we do not align ourselves nor will we recommend any consultants that may be used for your efforts.

Q: Does a Public School District qualify as a non-profit?

A: Under the IRS code, a public school may qualify as a nonprofit organization or 509(a) (1) organization. The school should be able to provide a current IRS tax exemption letter that states its tax status in order to meet the ABC competition eligibility requirements.

Q: I believe that the "non-profit" must be a 501(c) (3)

A: Typically the nonprofit organizations that have indicated interest in applying have been both 501(c) 3, as well as, 501(c) 6. All organizations must submit IRS tax-exempt letters to confirm their nonprofit status during the application process as well as meet the other criteria listed in the official rules for nonprofit organizations to be eligible to participate.

Q: Would a letter from the CEO of the Chamber of Commerce who is leading the program work for your letter of support? Or does it need to be the Mayor?

A: The rules require that the letter of support come from the highest elected government official, representing the community of the applicant. As such, a letter from the CEO of the Chamber of Commerce will not meet the criteria.

Q: I have started my application and have not received an email with the toolkit, will I receive that when I load the letter of support.

A: Contest participants will receive a free Community Revitalization Toolkit within one week of registering for the competition. You can register by providing your contact information and selecting the community you represent in the dropdown list on the America's Best Communities website. If you do not receive a toolkit after one week, please send an inquiry to info@americasbestcommunities.com.



Q: Is this webinar being recorded? If so, will it be accessible via the ABC website?

A: The webinar on October 29, 2014 was not recorded; however, the questions addressed on this document represent the questions addressed during that session. Additionally, the webinar held on November 6, 2014 was recorded and can be accessed here:
<https://www4.gotomeeting.com/register/161609671>

Q: How do you define direct benefit for a local business? Must the benefit be a contract award or can the benefit be in the nature of an improvement that benefits the businesses' bottom line?

A: Under Section 7 "How the Applications and Community Revitalization Plans will be Judged" in the Official Rules (available on the website) the factors that the judges will consider when evaluating the beneficial impact on the community and the region are included but not limited, to the following:

- Ability to attract new businesses or increase investment to the community
- Adjusting to and overcoming national and regional economic trends
- Short- and long-term job creation
- Improvements to small-scale local infrastructure (e.g. Wi-Fi availability, lighting improvements, event venues, signage)
- Improvements to educational/technical training opportunities for the community and the region
- Impact on availability and affordability of housing
- Improvements to the overall legal and regulatory environment to promote sustainable revitalization for both small and large businesses (e.g. zoning, business licenses, land banking)
- Successful leveraging of federal and regional resources
- Creative responses to challenging economic and geographic hurdles
- Successful leveraging of public/private partnerships

Any further information on the definition of direct benefits for a local business that will be used by the judges for scoring sustainable community revitalization points in the grand prize round will be decided by the judges and provided on line in the official rules for the participants' reference.

Q: Are capital projects, i.e., land acquisition and building projects eligible?

A: Yes, capital projects can be submitted in the community revitalization plan for consideration.

Q: Since the ultimate goal of the grants is to encourage long-term growth, do you have any benchmarks in mind for growth targets?

A: The independent judges that will be providing input and scoring the benchmarks for growth targets will be better able to provide additional information aside from the Official Rules on the ABC website. Please review that section in detail for further information on factors that will be considered by the judges:
<https://americasbestcommunities.com/official-rules/>



Q: Can you tell us how many communities have registered to date?

A: As of October 28, 2014, the America's Best Communities Prize contest had 65 communities registered to date.

Q: I started my application and even though I put population 14428 it says my population is not big enough and I must partner. Is this a problem with the system?

A: The minimum population required to compete is 9,500. Thus, it does appear you are receiving this notice in error. If you receive a notice that you believe is in error, please send an inquiry to info@americasbestcommunities.com and a contest administrator will assist you.

Q: For the local business requirement, are we committed to the ones identified in the application?

A: Yes, the expectation is that the businesses identified as team members in the application would remain throughout the competition period until the contest requirements are fulfilled as awards are made under the terms of the winners' agreements.

Q: Can the contact person not be associated with the non-profit?

A: More than one contact person may be included on the application form but the lead contact person must be associated with the nonprofit organization.

Q: Can an entire county apply, if under 80,000?

A: Yes, an entire county may apply to the contest, provided that the entire county is within the Frontier service area and has a total population between 9,500 and 80,000.

Q: Is there an example of a community that has won? Or a community that has inspired the contest?

A: No, this contest format is unique and the brainchild of Frontier Chairman and CEO Maggie Wilderotter. There is no community that inspired the contest, only the vision of Frontier leadership.