

Direct Assistance by the National Resource Network

The National Resource Network (the Network) is a core component of the Obama Administration's Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) initiative, and develops and delivers innovative solutions to American cities to help them address their toughest economic challenges. The Network works with local leaders to identify practical solutions, share real-world expertise and best practices, and develop the tools and strategies they need to grow their economies. The Network leverages the expertise, partnerships, and resources of the public and private sectors to help cities comprehensively tackle their most pressing challenges. The Network provides cities with customized tools and advice to build strategic partnerships, strengthen their economic competitiveness, and marshal public and private sector resources.

As one of its services to communities, the Network is announcing a direct technical assistance program. Our goal is to help local governments and their partners in economically challenged communities develop and implement strategies for economic recovery. These strategies could focus on capacity issues related to local government operations or budgets, economic development, land use, transportation, workforce development, community development, housing, and public safety, among others. In many cases, individual cities will have cross-cutting strategies that touch on multiple areas of focus.

Through direct technical assistance, the Network and the city government will work together to identify a plan that will have the greatest likely impact in advancing economic recovery. Direct assistance will be provided by a combination of the members of the Network's consortium, the Network's Strategic Partners, and firms or organizations that have been approved for work with the Network. The direct technical assistance program provides eligible cities with assessments and strategies that are tailored to address their specific needs.

The services offered by the Network under the direct technical assistance program are best suited for cities that have populations of 40,000 or more, and one or more of the following challenges:

- a 2013 annual average unemployment rate of 9 percent or more, as measured by the Bureau of Labor Statistics;
- a poverty rate of 20 percent or more (excluding students enrolled in undergraduate, graduate or professional school), as measured by the 2010-2012 American Community Survey;
- a population decline of 5 percent or more between 2000 and 2010, as measured by the U.S. Decennial Census.

For assistance in determining whether your city meets one or more of these criteria, please click [here](#).

Cities with populations of 40,000 or more that do not meet these criteria may be candidates for assistance under the direct technical assistance program if they have one or more of the following challenges: a limitation in core local government capacity as evidenced by a bond rating downgrade or change in outlook; failure to balance local government budget for two or more years in a row since 2008; and/or a reduction of 10 percent or more of local government workforce in the last three years.

. The National Resource Network is especially interested in providing direct assistance through regional engagements where multiple cities in the same geographic region seek to work together to address a common set of problems. This type of joint request is strongly encouraged; only one city in a joint request must meet the criteria outlined above.

Cities receiving direct technical assistance should note that they will be requested to provide additional funding or resources to support their technical assistance. To inquire about how the Network may assist your city under the direct technical assistance, please complete this short application. The Network may contact the city for additional information to better understand its challenges and priorities based on its request for direct assistance.

Information for Direct Assistance

Background Information

1. Name of City

A. If this is a joint request, please indicate other cities participating in the request

2. Name of Mayor:

3. Name of City Manager or other City officials with overall day to day responsibility for City operations:

4. Name of Point of Contact (individual responsible for application):

5. Title of Point of Contact:

6. Email address of Point of Contact:

7. Telephone number of Point of Contact:

8. Address of Point of Contact:

9. Name of Federal Agency Staff Member if Referred by a Federal Agency (if applicable):

Economic Challenges

Please provide a statement advising of the most pressing fiscal, economic and community development challenges facing the city, any actions that have been initiated or implemented in the last two years to address those challenges, and how the city can be best assisted by the Network's direct technical assistance. Please advise whether the city's need for assistance will involve other cities and indicate if political leadership (mayor, city council, etc.) and partnering organizations are supportive to receiving direct assistance. (If possible, please provide a statement of no more than 1,000 words).

Cities with populations of 40,000 or more that do not meet the economic and demographic criteria (Please refer to [this page](#) to determine whether your city meets the criteria for eligibility outlined above) may be candidates for assistance, and should also provide a statement below advising the Network about their challenges in

one or more of the following areas: a limitation in core local government capacity as evidenced by a bond rating downgrade or change in outlook; failure to balance local government budget for two or more years in a row since 2008; and/or a reduction of 10 percent or more of local government workforce in the last three years. If possible, please provide a statement of no more than 1,000 words.



Project Management

The Network believes that high level executive sponsorship is critical to the success of the direct assistance program. As a result, we strongly encourage cities to identify project managers who are – or directly report to – the Mayor, City Manager, First Deputy Mayor or Chief Administrative Officer. Provide the name of the city's Project Manager and his or her reporting relationship within city government



The Network would like to understand the cities interest in the following items below to ensure that the provision of technical assistance can result in maximized resources and greater learning opportunities. Please check all that apply.

The City is interested in participating in National Resource Network peer to peer activity for at least one year after the completion of the National Resource Network direct assistance plan.

The City is interested in cooperating with an evaluation of the National Resource Network.

The City is interested in working with other cities facing similar challenges.

The City is interested in participating in the Network's free "311 for Cities" (NEED A LINK TO DESCRIPTION ON THE WEBSITE) service that enables local officials to request and receive assistance through the Network's website.

The city is interested in accessing information through 311 for Cities in the following areas (you may select up to five areas):

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brownfields and Vacant Properties | <input type="checkbox"/> Finance and Budgeting | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Safety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizen Engagement | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Human Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Tax Policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Data and Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Management and Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Downtown Revitalization | <input type="checkbox"/> Pension Reform | <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Health | |

Additional Information/Files to Upload

Please submit any of the following information, if available, as PDF files or web links. These materials will be used to support evaluation of the request for assistance:

- Signed letter from the chief executive, expressing support for the city's request for assistance
- The city's most recent Budget
- The city's last three years of Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFR) and Annual Audits
- Citywide economic development strategy