



APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR CLOUD COUNTY SMALL BUSINESS GRANT FUNDS

Funding for the Get in the Cloud Grant Funds is provided by the Meridian Way Wind Farm Grant Fund and disbursed by the Cloud County Commission Board. Administration of the program is provided by CloudCorp. Each year, the Cloud County Board of Commissioners sets aside funding for the Grant Program.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The Get in the Cloud grant funds are intended to encourage economic development in Cloud County, while increasing the property value of existing structures or land.

The Get in the Cloud grant fund provides competitive grants and mentoring support for new and existing businesses. Entrepreneurs who successfully complete the educational component and who own an existing business located in Cloud County or are developing a business concept they intend to locate in Cloud County will be eligible to apply for a one-time grant of 50% of start-up costs or \$50,000, whichever is less, to fund eligible expenses as further described below. Existing businesses are eligible if they can show increased sales/customer base from an addition to their current facility.

The decision to award the funds rests solely with the CloudCorp Get in the Cloud Grant Committee with final approval of the awardee slate by the Cloud County Commissioners. If awarded funds, CloudCorp will monitor the business to assure that the awarded funds are used as stated in the grant application. CloudCorp extends further support by providing participants with a network of experienced, successful business mentors they may rely on after the courses end and as they continue building their business.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

Application for this funding program is open multiple times a year upon availability of funds. Specific dates are announced. Applications are not accepted outside of the published cycles. Full applications can be emailed, faxed, mailed, or dropped off in person at the CloudCorp office where they will be stamped with the date and time of delivery.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible, the business must be physically located in Cloud County and must be a for-profit entity.

Get in the Cloud Grant Funds may be used to assist owner-operated businesses with objectives identified in their business plan relating to construction or repair of permanent structures. Some of those objectives may include:

1. Repair of existing structure. This includes repair or remodeling of the interior or exterior. The funds can be used for permanent fixtures such as HVAC, plumbing fixtures, flooring, lighting, etc. Funds can also be used for site clearance.
2. New Building Construction. The funds can be used for permanent fixtures such as HVAC, plumbing fixtures, flooring, lighting, etc. Funds can also be used for site clearance.

All projects must adhere to applicable zoning regulations and building codes. Leasehold improvements can only be made with written permission from the property owner. Other funding sources can be used for the above items. Applicants must be current on all property taxes in Cloud County.

INELIGIBLE USE OF FUNDS

Businesses with 50 employees or more are **NOT** eligible to apply for these funds. These projects are encouraged to apply directly to CloudCorp for funding consideration.

Grant funds cannot be used for the following: (list includes but not limited to)

1. Working Capital
2. Purchase of existing structure
3. Land purchase
4. Inventory
5. Furniture
6. Payroll/Salary/Benefit Expenses/Taxes
7. Equipment
8. Housing or residential rental properties. Mixed use properties such as a retail building with an attached apartment are allowable with stipulation. Please visit with CloudCorp.

COMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL INCLUDE...

	Existing Business Owning the Property	New Business Owning the Property	Existing Business Renting/Leasing the Property	New Business Renting/Leasing the Property
Completed Application Form	✓	✓	✓	✓
Completed Budget Form	✓	✓	✓	✓
Business Plan		✓		✓
Past 3 Years Income Tax Returns	✓		✓	
Personal Financial Statement	✓	✓	✓	✓
Past 3 Years-end balance sheet and book value financial statement (if not in tax returns)	✓		✓	
Startup Costs		✓		✓
Three-year income/expense projections	✓	✓	✓	✓
Letter from bank verifying participation through loans or letter from bank or backer verifying cash injection	✓	✓	✓	✓
Signed Marketing Release of Information	✓	✓	✓	✓
Signed copy of mentoring agreement		✓		✓
Construction or repairs estimates (2 quotes are required and one must be from a vendor/contractor located in Cloud County)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Verification of completion of SBDC Training		✓		✓
Signed copy of permission for leasehold improvements			✓	✓
A signed copy of a lease at least 3 years or longer			✓	✓

The LRS Small Business Series includes 3 classes: Meeting the 3 Ms – Learning the Basics of Money, Marketing & Management, The Right Start – Using a Business Plan and Cash Flow Made Easy. New businesses must verify the completion of these three courses. Existing businesses do not have to take these courses.

Establishing a relationship with a business mentor increases the likelihood of an entrepreneur to succeed. New businesses wishing to be considered for a Get in the Cloud Grant must identify a mentor that will agree to help in the following ways:

1. Look over your business plan and make suggestions.
2. Do a monthly financial review for the first year after doors open.
3. Do a quarterly financial review for the remaining two years after doors open.
4. Be available to answer questions.

A business mentor does not necessarily have to be someone who resides in the county, but it is helpful if they are close enough to meet one on one. It is also advisable to have a mentor that is versed in the type of business you are starting. The CloudCorp executive director will work with applicants to find a mentor who can appropriately assist in their venture.

Applicants requiring assistance with completion of any part of this application, or the recommended inclusions should contact CloudCorp: 785-243-2010 or email: info@cloudcorp.net

Get in the Cloud Management Guidelines

1. CloudCorp Grant Advisory Board

Joe Strecker- Former Concordia Business Owner
 Terry Koch-Former Clyde Business Owner
 Loren Swenson- Rural Concordia Business Owner
 Kathy Imhoff- Concordia Business Owner
 Shelly Farha- Cloud County Community College
 Phil Sudduth- Concordia Business Owner
 Landee Thyfault- Banker

2. The Grant Advisory Board will meet 5 times a year or as needed at the CloudCorp office. The Advisory Board is tasked with making decisions with regard to application approval and subsequent funding. The board will review applications deemed complete by the local managing agency (CloudCorp), and a follow-up interview will be scheduled with the applicant(s) receiving preliminary approval. The Grant Advisory Board will rate the application using the following rubric which places emphasis on established criteria as indicated. Please use the table below to guide your decisions when preparing the application.

Criteria	Strength (1 low-5 high)	Weight (% of Total)	Weighted Score
Business Plan/Summary Information (Question #17 on the application)		20	
Future Prospects for growth and plan to capture growth potential through marketing. (Question # 18 on the application)		15	
Potential Economic Impact of your Business on the Community (Question #19 on the application)		15	
How will the grant impact this project? (Question #20 on the application)		10	
Owner/Operator Experience (Question #21 on the application)		10	
Quality of life impact (Question #22 on the application)		10	
Financial Soundness (Question #23 on the application plus financial items on the checklist)		20	
TOTAL		100%	

Tabulating Scores

Each criterion is scored on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high). The scores of each Advisory Board member are added together and multiplied by the weighted percentage of each criterion. The resulting number is the Total Weighted Score for the Applicant. The higher the Total Weighted Score, the more likely the applicant will receive Get in the Cloud Grant Funds.

Approval Process

Applications approved for funding by the advisory board will be forwarded to the CloudCorp Board of Directors and presented to the Cloud County Board of Commissioners for final recommendation approval. CloudCorp will then notify the applicant of approval. Once an application is brought before the County Commission, it becomes public information. Applicants should expect their project summary and costs of the project to be shared with the commission. All other financial data will only be shared with the Get in the Cloud committee.

Grant funds must be accepted by the grantee within one month of receiving their award letter. All grant funds must be used within the calendar year after award date. Funds not used before that date will be returned to the general grant pool.

Grant funds will not be paid directly to the recipient. In order to ensure funds were used for intended purposes, funds will be distributed directly to the vendors used for the project. An applicant can turn in receipts to CloudCorp. CloudCorp will then inspect the work to ensure it is complete and submit receipts for payment. **Reimbursements will not be allowed under any circumstances.**

Grant funds are considered business income and must be reported on your taxes. Please consult your financial advisor before applying.

Those applicants who are denied funding will be provided a list of considerations that can be addressed to improve the prospects for approval. Revised applications may be re-submitted no sooner than 90 days after initial application.

CloudCorp will provide administrative support to the Get in the Cloud Small Business Grants.