Department *of*
DISABILITY & AGING

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS: INFORMAL SOLICITATION FOR SERVICE

I. STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Tennessee Department of Disability and Aging (DDA) is the designated State Unit on Aging (SUA) and is mandated to provide leadership relative to aging issues on behalf of older persons in the state. Our mission is to empower, support, and enhance the lives of people with disabilities and older Tennesseans by promoting independence, inclusion, and the pursuit of lifelong health.

DDA has received a non-recurring allocation of five million dollars ($5,000,000) from the Tennessee General Assembly (House Bill No. 2631, Section 36 item 145) to distribute to senior centers across the state through a competitive grant process. For this process, a scoring metric will be used to distribute these funds in support of the vital work senior centers do to assist older adults across Tennessee with access to resources, activities, and social connection.

DDA is seeking applications from senior centers across Tennessee that describes how the senior center intends to use the funding, if awarded, for improvements and benefits to the senior center and its participants. These funds are non-recurring, which means funds are not guaranteed on an annual basis. Applications cannot be modified once approved for funding. Funds MUST be spent on the items addressed in this application only.

To be considered a Senior Center, the organization must:

a. Meet the following definition of a senior center:

   A non-residential community facility for the organization and provision of a broad spectrum of services which shall include provision of health (including mental and behavioral health), social, nutritional, and educational services and the provision of facilities for recreational activities for older individuals, including as provided via virtual facilities; and

b. Be an organization with established programming that provides a minimum of 16 hours a month of activities or services targeted for adults 60 and over.

Funding will be awarded through a competitive process based on a standardized scoring methodology. Grants will range from $5,000 to $50,000 per applicant and must be used for approved project categories such as capital improvements, programming, marketing, or operating expenses. These grants are competitive, meaning not all applications will receive funding. Grant recipients must expend all grant funds by March 31, 2028.

II. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

a. SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATION

i. DDA is asking for applications to be submitted digitally, via electronic submission or email, to the following:

1. Electronic submission form:

   2026 Senior Center Grant Application

2. Department of Disability & Aging
   Name: Sidney Enss
   Title: Director of Volunteer Engagement and Senior Center Liaison
   Email: Sidney.Enss@tn.gov

ii. Handwritten, mailed, and faxed submission will NOT be accepted.

iii. The grant application shall be received at the above-listed electronic form or email address no later than 4:00 p.m. (Central Standard Time) on Friday, August 7, 2026

b. SCHEDULE FOR GRANT APPLICATION EVALUATION AND AWARD

i. Request for Applications Released – June 1, 2026

ii. Information Session Webinar – June 10, 2026, at 10:00a CST (11:00a EST)

iii. Application Open for Submissions – June 22, 2026

iv. Application Submission Deadline – August 7, 2026

v. Anticipated Date for Notice of Award – September 11, 2026

vi. Execute Grant Contracts – November 1, 2026

vii. Mid-Term Report 1 Due – March 31, 2027

viii. Mid-Term Report 2 Due – October 31, 2027

ix. Deadline for Spending Grant Funds – March 31, 2028

x. Final Report Due – April 30, 2028

Note: The Department reserves the right to adjust this schedule as it deems necessary, at its sole discretion. If the Department adjusts this schedule, the update will be disseminated via Open Line and the DDA Grant Funding Opportunities webpage. Any questions regarding the updated schedule can be sent to: Sidney.Enss@tn.gov.

c. ALL COMMUNICATION IN REFERENCE TO THIS NOTICE SHALL BE DIRECTED TO:

Department of Disability & Aging
Name: Sidney Enss
Title: Director of Volunteer Engagement and Senior Center Liaison
Email: Sidney.Enss@tn.gov

d. GRANT DURATION

The Department intends to enter into grants with a duration of up to seventeen (17) months, depending on the need addressed through the application process. This grant cycle for this contract will be November 1, 2026 – March 31, 2028. This contract must be signed by the authorized signatory listed on the 2026 Senior Center Grant Application.

e. FUNDS AVAILABLE

A total of $5,000,000 in non-recurring funding is available for distribution through this grant opportunity. Individual awards will range from $5,000 to $50,000 per senior center, based on demonstrated need and application scoring.

Funds under this Grant Contract will be awarded on a competitive basis in accordance with FY27 evaluation criteria. Applications will be reviewed and scored across six (6) components by third-party evaluators with no direct benefit from the grants. These evaluators will remain anonymous.

All narratives will be de-identified by the department, so reviewers do not know the name, county, or other identifying information about the senior center applying for funds. This will allow reviewers to remain impartial, and score solely based on the information provided in the narratives submitted. Once the deadline for submissions has closed, no additional details or comments will be accepted for consideration. It is vital that each senior center be as detailed as possible when answering every question of the project and budget narratives (Project & Budget Narrative Scoring Rubric in *Appendix B*).

Awards will be given to the highest-scoring applicants based on available funding and at the Department's discretion. Final award amounts may differ from the amount requested and will be determined based on funding availability, budget reasonableness, and alignment with program priorities. The Department reserves the right to make partial or conditional awards and to deny or adjust budgets that include unallowable or unsupported costs.

Funding will be distributed on a cost-reimbursement basis, meaning grantees must pay expenses upfront and submit documentation for reimbursement. If funds remain after initial awards, they may be distributed to the next highest-scoring applicants until fully obligated. Reimbursement is expected within 4–6 weeks of invoice submission.

The required Project Budget Template (*Appendix A*) must be completed. Please see below in Appendix A and complete.

f. FUNDING LIMITATIONS

Grant funds may not be used for the following:

i. Alcohol

ii. Purchase of gift cards for any purpose

iii. Salaries for staff currently on payroll

g. LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Obtaining letters of support from your local senator and representative is a requirement to apply for these grant funds. To ensure you request a letter of support from the appropriate elected official, please use the Find My Legislator website. On the website, type in your senior center's physical address to determine the appropriate elected official to contact.

i. Find My Legislator website

ii. Please DO NOT request a letter from Senators Marsha Blackburn or Bill Hagerty.

iii. DDA has a new address. Please use the most updated sample letter template in *Appendix F.*

h. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A reporting template will be provided to each grant recipient. This template will be completed three times during the grant cycle; once by March 31, 2027 (mid-term), once by October 31, 2027 (mid-term) and once by April 30, 2028 (final). All grantees are required to submit the following information:

i. List of items purchased.

ii. Number of unduplicated people served.

iii. Pictures of items, materials, programs/activities, etc. purchased using grant funds

iv. Testimonials from senior center members about how the funding impacted their participation at the center

i. REGISTER WITH THE STATE

If a senior center has not received previous grant funding, DDA requires that the senior center register to be a supplier with the State of Tennessee as soon as possible. To register as a State of Tennessee supplier, please use the link below and click "Register as a Supplier" in the middle section of the webpage.

i. Register as a Supplier

ii. Supplier Guide: Registering as a Supplier with the State of Tennessee and Obtaining a Supplier ID

j. DIRECT DEPOSIT

For any senior center that does not have direct deposit set up with Edison Supplier Maintenance through the State, it is required that an application is completed as soon as possible using the link below. Direct Deposit payments can only be distributed when an account is listed on the senior center's Edison Vendor profile.

i. SDDA Access Form
   1. This form must be completed and emailed to FA.SupplierSupport@tn.gov.
   2. DDA does not process these requests.

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES REQUESTED

a. PRIMARY FOCUS

The primary focus of this grant is to support senior centers in enhancing services and resources for older adults by funding projects that improve facility infrastructure, expand programming, increase community engagement, and support operational needs.

Eligible projects may include but are not limited to:

i. Capital improvements (building renovation, equipment purchases)
ii. Marketing and outreach efforts
iii. Programming and activity enhancements
iv. Routine Operating Expenses

IV. GRANT APPLICATION FORMAT

a. The grant application must address all portions of this Notice as set forth herein. It is strongly encouraged that all grantees type their responses to all grant questions in a Microsoft Word document to copy and paste into the electronic 2026 TN Senior Center Grant Application.

b. The Department reserves the right to request clarification or corrections to grant applications, to reject any and all grant applications or to cancel

this Notice in its entirety at the Department's sole discretion. Any grant application received which does not meet these General Instructions may be considered to be "Non-Responsive" and the grant application may be rejected. Any rejection or acceptance of applications is at the sole discretion of the Department.

c. The Department reserves the right to further clarify and/or negotiate with the best evaluated grant applications, subsequent to award recommendation but prior to contract execution, if such is deemed necessary at the discretion of the Department.

V. MODIFICATIONS FOR GRANT

Any and all changes made to an awarded grant must be submitted to DDA for approval PRIOR to implementing changes.

VI. SUBJECT TO FUNDS AVAILABILITY

The award of a grant contract under this Grant Application is subject to the appropriation and availability of State funds.

PROGRAM APPLICATION

THIS YEAR'S GRANT IS A COST-REIMBURSMENT GRANT ONLY. I UNDERSTAND THAT IF MY SENIOR CENTER IS SELECTED AS A GRANT RECIPIENT, WE WILL BE REQUIRED TO PAY FOR ALL PURCHASES UP FRONT AND SUBMIT RECIPETS OF PAYMENT TO BE REIMBURSED:

_____YES

_____NO

IS YOUR ORGANRIZATION A RESIDENTIAL FACILITY FOR OLDER ADULTS?:

_____YES

_____NO

SENIOR CENTER NAME:

_____

COUNTY OF SENIOR CENTER LOCATION:

_____

AMOUNT OF FUDNING BEING REQUESTED ($5,000-$50,000):

_____

SENIOR CENTER FISCAL YEAR (Ex: January 1-December 31, July 1-June 30, etc.):

_____

YOUR SENIOR CENTER'S EIN (Employer Identification Number, found on W9):

_____

TYPE OF ENTITY (How the senior center is registered with the Secretary of State):

_____ NONPROFIT (has 501 c 3 status)

_____ CITY GOVERNMENT (Managed through city government processes)

_____ COUNTY GOVERNMENT (Managed through county government processes)

SENIOR CENTER PHYSICAL ADDRESS: (include Street Address, City, State and Zip Code):

SENIOR CENTER MAILING ADDRESS (only if different, include Street Address, City, State and Zip Code):

DOES YOUR SENIOR CENTER PROVIDE A MINIMUM OF 16 HOURS A MONTH OF ACTIVITIES OR SERVICES TARGERED FOR ADULTS 60 AND OVER? (Proof of programming is required for your submission):

_____ Yes

_____ No

SENIOR CENTER CONTACT FIRST AND LAST NAME (This person will be the primary contact and receive all grant correspondence via email):

SENIOR CENTER CONTACT TITLE/POSITION AT THE SENIOR CENTER:

SENIOR CENTER CONTACT EMAIL ADDRESS:

SENIOR CENTER CONTACT PHONE NUMBER:

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY FIRST AND LAST NAME (Person authorized to sign contracts on behalf of the senior center):

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY TITLE/POSITION AT THE SENIOR CENTER:

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY EMAIL ADDRESS:

_____

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY PHONE NUMBER:

_____

GRANT GOALS (Select all that apply):

_____ CAPITAL PROJECTS (building improvements, equipment, etc.)

_____ MARKETING AND OUTREACH

_____ PROGRRAMS/ACTIVITIES

_____ ROUTINE OPERATING EXPENSES

LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM STATE SENATOR (See *Appendix F* for sample letter):

_____ YES

_____ NO

LETTER OF SUPPORT FORM STATE REPRESENTATIVE (See *Appendix F* for sample letter):

_____ YES

_____ NO

PREFERRED METHOD OF PAYMENT (If awarded a grant, select your preference on receiving grant funds)

_____DIRECT DEPOSIT (Last four digits of the account number):

_____

_____ CHECK MAILED (Address the check should be mailed to):

_____

SIGN GRANT AGREEMENT:

I _____, understand, if awarded a Senior Center Grant, all funds received from this grant must be used for the improvement and benefit of the above-mentioned senior center and must be expended by March 31, 2028.

_____

(Senior Center Contact's Printed Name)

_____ _____

(Senior Center Contact's Signature) (Date)

CURRENT NEED(S) SENTENCE — POINTS 10

Complete the following sentence:

The funds requested will be used to fund or purchase _____.

SENIOR CENTER BACKGROUND — POINTS 10

Please provide any information about your center you would like the reviewers to know (500 words maximum).

IMPACT — POINTS 10

Describe the impact your project will have on the senior center and its participants if you receive grant funds.

PROJECT TIMELINE — POINTS 10

Timelines can be adjusted during the grant cycle. The purpose of this section is to create a monthly plan that ensures all funds are expended by the grant deadline. Create a detailed monthly timeline from November 1, 2026 – March 31, 2028, for how you plan to spend the funds you are requesting.

PROJECT BUDGET — POINTS 10

Complete a project budget using the required budget template *(Appendix A)* provided by DDA. Using a different budget template will result in an automatic reduction of points. Each budget category should be rounded to the nearest $1,000.

BUDGET NARRATIVE — POINTS 10

Provide an explanation and the calculations for how you determined the funding amounts for each category of your budget.

2026 TARGETED AREA — POINTS 1-5

Department of Economic and Community Development - See *Appendix C* for county breakdown.

5 pts "Distressed"
4 pts "At Risk"
3 pts "Transitional"
2 pts "Competitive"
1 pt. "Attainment"

ESTIMATED 65+ POPULATION IN 2026 — POINTS 1-5

Tennessee Department of Health, pg. 5-6 – See *Appendix D* for county breakdown.

5 pts 30% or higher
4 pts 25-29.9%
3 pts 20-24.9%
2 pts 15-19.9%
1 pt. 10-14.9%

ADULTS 65+ AT POVERTY LEVEL — POINTS 1-5

based on US Census Bureau Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months - See *Appendix E* for county breakdown.

5 pts 25% or higher
4 pts 20-24.9%
3 pts 15-19.9%
2 pts 10-14.9%
1 pt. 9.9% or lower

TIE SCORES

In the event applicants receive tied scores, it is within DDA's discretion to decide how the tie is broken. DDA's decision is not appealable. The applicant who submitted their application the earliest will receive priority determination of funding but will not automatically be granted funding. Therefore, it is important to submit your application as soon as possible.

APPENDIX A

PROJECT BUDGET TEMPLATE

Each budget category should be rounded to the nearest $1,000.

Object Class Category	Grant Funds requested
Capital Projects	
Marketing	
Programs/Activities	
Operating Expenses	
Supplies	
Travel	

Total:_____

Appendix B:

PROJECT AND BUDGER NARRATIVE SCORING RUBIRC

Grant Application: _____ Grant Reviewer #_____

Narrative question	10 points Exceeds Expectations	6 points Meets Expectations	2 points Does not Meet Expectations	Score
Current Need(s) Sentence: Complete the following sentence: The funds requested will be used to fund or purchase _____.	Completed the statement using only 1 sentence. Listed 1 or more items to be funded or purchased	Completed the statement using 2 sentences. Listed 1 or more items to be funded or purchased.	Completed the statement using 3 or more sentences. Listed 1 or more items to be funded or purchased.	
Reviewer Comments:				

Narrative question	10 points Exceeds Expectations	6 points Meets Expectations	2 points Does not Meet Expectations	Score
Senior Center Background: Please provide any information about your center you would like the reviewers to know (500 words maximum).	Senior center provided information about their centers using 500 words or less	Senior center provided information about their centers using 501-700 words	Senior center provided information about their centers using more than 700 words	
Reviewer Comments:				

Narrative question	10 - 8 points Exceeds Expectations	7 - 5 points Meets Expectations	4 - 0 points Does not Meet Expectations	Score
Impact: Describe the impact your project will have on the senior center and its participants if you receive grant funds.	Clearly describes the impact the project will have on the senior center and its participants. Gives descriptive examples and details regarding the project's impact. Reviewer is left with a vivid understanding of project's impact on the senior center and its participants.	Describes the impact the project will have on the senior center and its participants. Provides some details regarding the project's impact. Reviewer is left with questions on how the project will impact the senior center and its participants.	Did not describe the impact the project will have on the senior center and its participants. Provides minimal to no details regarding the project's impact. Reviewer is left with little to no understanding of how the project will impact the senior center and its participants.	
Reviewer Comments:				

Narrative question	10 - 8 points Exceeds Expectations	7 - 5 points Meets Expectations	4 - 0 points Does not Meet Expectations	Score
Project Timeline: Create a detailed monthly timeline from November 1, 2026 – March 31, 2028, for how you plan to spend the funds you are requesting.	Clearly details how the senior center plans to spend the funds each month during the project timeline.	Details how the senior center plans to spend the funds but does not provide a monthly breakdown.	Provides minimal to no details on how the senior center plans to spend their funds and does not provide a monthly breakdown.	
Reviewer Comments:				

Narrative question	10 points Exceeds Expectations	6 points Meets Expectations	2 points Does not Meet Expectations	Score
Project Budget: Complete a project budget using the required budget template (*Appendix A*) provided by DDA. Using a different budget template will result in an automatic reduction of points. Each budget category should be rounded to the nearest $1,000.	Senior center uses the required budget template provided by DDA. Each budget category is rounded to the nearest $1,000.	Senior center does not use the required budget template provided by DDA. Each budget category is rounded to the nearest $1,000.	Senior center does not use the required budget template provided by DDA. Each budget category is not rounded to the nearest $1,000.	
Reviewer Comments:				

Narrative question	10 - 8 points Exceeds Expectations	7 - 5 points Meets Expectations	4 - 0 points Does not Meet Expectations	Score
Budget Narrative: Provide an explanation and the calculations for how you determined the funding amounts for each category of your budget.	Provides details on the specific materials to be purchased for each category and the calculations made to determine funding for each category. Reviewer is left with a vivid understanding of the materials to be purchased and how the funding amounts for each category were calculated.	Does not provide details on the materials to be purchased for each category **OR** the calculations made to determine funding for each category. Reviewer is left with questions on the materials to be purchased **OR** how the funding amounts for each category were calculated.	Provides minimal to no details on the materials to be purchased for each category **AND** the calculations made to determine funding for each category. Reviewer is left with little to no understanding on the materials to be purchased **AND** how the funding amounts for each category were calculated.	
Reviewer Comments:				

Total Narratives Score: _____

APPENDIX C

2026 TARGETED AREAS (Department of Economic and Community Development)

5 pts Distressed	4 pts At-Risk	3 pts Transitional
Bledsoe	Benton	Anderson
Clay	Campbell	Bedford
Cocke	Carroll	Bradley
Grundy	Carter	Cannon
Hancock	Claiborne	Chester
Hardeman	Decatur	Coffee
Haywood	DeKalb	Crockett
Lake	Fentress	Cumberland
Perry	Greene	Dickson
Pickett	Hardin	Dyer
Scott	Hawkins	Franklin
	Houston	Gibson
	Jackson	Giles
	Johnson	Grainger
	Lauderdale	Hamblen
	McNairy	Hamilton
	Meigs	Henderson
	Morgan	Henry
	Overton	Hickman
	Sequatchie	Humphreys
	Unicoi	Jefferson
	Van Buren	Lawrence
	Warren	Lewis
	Wayne	Lincoln
		Loudon
		Macon
		Madison
		Marion
		Marshall
		Maury
		McMinn
		Monroe
		Montgomery

3 pts Transitional, cont.

Moore
Obion
Polk
Putnam
Rhea
Roane
Roberson
Sevier
Shelby
Smith
Stewart
Sullivan
Tipton
Trousdale
Union
Washington
Weakley
White

2 pts Competitive

Blount
Cheatham
Davidson
Fayette
Knox
Rutherford
Sumner

1 pt. Attainments

Williamson
Wilson

APPENDIX D

ESTIMATED 65+ POPULATION IN 2026 (Tennessee Department of Health, pg. 5-6)

5 pts 30% or above	4 pts 25-29.9%	3 pts 20-24.9%
Cumberland	Benton	Anderson
Loudon	Carter	Bledsoe
Pickett	Clay	Blount
	Cocke	Campbell
	Decatur	Cannon
	Fayette	Carroll
	Fentress	Chester
	Greene	Claiborne
	Hancock	Crockett
	Hardin	DeKalb
	Hawkins	Dyer
	Henry	Franklin
	Jackson	Gibson
	Johnson	Giles
	Monroe	Grainger
	Moore	Grundy
	Roane	Hamblen
	Unicoi	Hamilton
	Van Buren	Hardeman
		Haywood
		Henderson
		Hickman
		Houston
		Humphreys
		Jefferson
		Lawrence
		Lewis
		Lincoln
		Madison
		Marion
		McMinn
		McNairy
		Meigs
		Morgan

3 pts 20-24.9% cont.

Obion
Overton
Perry
Polk
Rhea
Sequatchie
Sevier
Smith
Stewart
Sullivan
Union
Warren
Washington
Wayne
Weakley
White

2 pts 15%-19.9%

Bedford
Bradley
Cheatham
Coffee
Dickson
Knox
Lake
Lauderdale
Macon
Marshall
Maury
Putnam
Robertson
Scott
Shelby
Sumner
Tipton
Williamson
Wilson

1 pt. 10%-14.9%

Davidson
Montgomery
Rutherford
Trousdale

APPENDIX E

ADULTS 65+ BELOW POVERTY LEVEL (based on US Census Bureau Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months)

5 pts 25% or above	**4 pts 20-24.9%**	**3 pts 15%-19.9%**
Hancock	Clay	Coffee
Trousdale	Decatur	Fentress
	Jackson	Hardeman
	Wayne	Hardin
		Haywood
		Lake
		Lauderdale
		Lawrence
		Lewis
		McNairy
		Monroe
		Obion
		Overton
		Scott

2 pts. 10%-14.9%	**2 pts. 10%-14.9%cont.**	**1pts. 9.9% or lower**
Anderson	Polk	Bedford
Benton	Putman	Blount
Bledsoe	Rhea	Cheatham
Bradley	Sequatchie	Crockett
Campbell	Sevier	Fayette
Cannon	Shelby	Giles
Carroll	Smith	Hamilton
Carter	Stewart	Henry
Chester	Sullivan	Hickman
Claiborne	Unicoi	Humphreys
Cocke	Union	Jefferson
Cumberland	Warren	Knox
Davidson	Washington	Loudon
DeKalb	Weakley	Maury
Dickson	White	McMinn
Dyer		Montgomery
Franklin		Roane
Gibson		Robertson
Grainger		Rutherford
Greene		Sumner
Grundy		Tipton
Hamblen		Van Buren
Hawkins		Williamson
Henderson		Wilson
Houston		
Johnson		
Lincoln		
Macon		
Madison		
Marion		
Marshall		
Meigs		
Moore		
Morgan		
Perry		
Pickett		

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE LETTER TO STATE SENATOR AND REPRESENTATIVE

[DATE], 2026

Commissioner Brad Turner
Tennessee Department of Disability and Aging
Davy Crockett Tower, 2nd Floor
500 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243-0860

Dear Commissioner Turner:

I am pleased to write this letter of support for the **[Senior Center]**'s application for a senior center grant from the Tennessee Department of Disability and Aging. The **[Senior Center Name]** plans to use funds to **[brief project description]**. I believe this project will be an asset to the constituents of my district.

Sincerely,

[First and Last Name]
[Representative / Senator]
Tennessee General Assembly