



## **E-Government for Government**

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Distribution: Municipal Clerks, Municipal Chief Financial Officers, Clerks to the Boards of Chosen Freeholders, & County Chief Financial Officers

### **GovConnect Grant Program Information**

#### **Purpose**

*GovConnect Grants* are to provide funding to those municipalities and counties (local units) whose "local officers" do not have access to computer equipment, Internet access, or training resources to enable them to access the GovConnect website. For the purpose of the grant program, local officers include the Municipal Clerk, Municipal Chief Financial Officer, County Clerk to the Board of Chosen Freeholders and County Chief Financial Officer.

Please read EGG Notices #6 and 7 for additional information related to GovConnect.

#### **Eligibility Requirements**

GovConnect Grants are for any local unit in which the local officer does not have access to an Internet capable PC or access to the Internet to conduct local unit business over the Internet and the GovConnect web site.

To maximize the funds that are available for the program, local units that employ part-time local officers are encouraged to work with them to take advantage of access the local officer may have personally or with another employer (and with that employers consent). This alternate approach qualifies as "access" to the system. Also, sharing a single computer

between a clerk and CFO is encouraged (and expected, where it is practicable) in small organizations that employ part-time local officers. Both these elements will be considered when grant applications are reviewed. Special attention will be paid to unusual situations, particularly those that occur in small local governments.

Further, computers and access provided through this program shall not be used for personal or non-local unit purposes.

#### **Funding**

Grants of up to \$1,500 are available to help eligible local units purchase computer hardware, software, training, and Internet service. Because the value of the grant is a minimum amount to buy basic resources, local units are encouraged to supplement the grant with local funds. This will enable the local unit to acquire a computer or services of greater capability than the bare minimum the grant will fund.

#### **Grant Elements**

While the maximum grant is capped at \$1,500, it is broken into the following categories, depending on the local unit's needs:

**A. Hardware and Software: \$1,000.**

1. One Internet capable desktop or laptop computer

Minimum Specifications:

- Pentium III Processor or equivalent (Apple-based products are not approved for GovConnect support)
- 56k Modem
- 5 Gb Hard Drive
- 64 Mb Memory
- CD-Rom drive
- Windows 98 or later operating system
- Browser: Microsoft Explorer 4.0 / Netscape Navigator 4.7 or higher
- Surge protector with phone line protector (short-term uninterruptible power supply (UPS) recommended)

*(Note: Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint viewers are available for free download to [view](#) and [print](#) documents posted on the GovConnect site. Users are encouraged, but not required to purchase an office suite program.)*

2. One Inkjet or laser printer, with new PC purchase only

**B. Internet Access:** The grant will provide \$360 for purchase of 3 years dial-up Internet access subscription from an Internet Service Provider (ISP). After this period, the local unit is to absorb the cost. This is based on metered service @ 20 hours per month (approx 1 hour per business day).

**Examples of ISP Subscription Options**

- Metered - \$9.95/20 hrs. -\$1.50 per additional hour.
- Unlimited - \$16.95 - \$21.95
- ISDN - \$49.95

- DSL/Cable- \$69.95
- Free - not recommended as most free service vendors are going out of business

**ISP Selection Criteria** – when considering selecting an ISP, the following elements should be taken into account:

1. Dial-up access to a local exchange (not area code)
2. Free set-up
3. Toll free technical support – 24 hours/7 days
4. Supports modem speed of 56k

**C. Training: Maximum \$140**

For either on-site or classroom instruction. Training is for new computer users to train them in basic computer use (Windows) and how to access and navigate the Internet.

Resources for computer training can include:

- County College (non-credit)
- Local High School Adult/Continuing Education programs
- County Vocational/Technical High Schools
- Retail computer/electronics stores
- Local consultants

**Procurement**

The purchase of the computer and related services is less than the Local Public Contracts Law quotation threshold of \$2,625 (15% of the \$17,500 threshold). Therefore, the purchase of the computer is **not** subject to competitive bid or formal quotation guidelines, making the choice of vendor one of "sound business practice" at the discretion of the local unit contracting agent. Local units are urged to consider the availability of support and training from the vendor from whom the computer is purchased.

**A. Equipment Vendors  
(the following are examples, are not  
all-inclusive and are not  
endorsements)**

- National/Regional retail chain locations: CompUSA, Gateway, Best Buy, etc.
- Local Yellow Page Retailers/Consultants
- Mail Order: Compaq, Dell, Gateway, IBM, etc.
- State Division of Purchase and Property: Cooperative Purchasing Program. Call 609.984.7047 and refer to contract ID #T0483 for detailed information on Microcomputer products. *(Note: while valuable for purchasing state-of-the-art computers, some additional local funding may be required for local units buying one computer).*

**B. ISP Vendors**

- Unlimited ISP service is often available from many equipment vendors and may be bundled as part of the purchase price.
- Some vendors offer discount pricing on subscription service when included with equipment purchase.
- Some of the largest ISP's include America Online, AT&T Worldnet, Microsoft Network (MSN), Earthlink, and Verizon, and local CATV companies (if available in your area). Many often include support of an Internet home page for the users, as well as multiple e-mail accounts.
- Most PC's come with information on subscribing to several different ISP's.

- State Division of Purchase and Property: Cooperative Purchasing Program. Call 609.984.7047 and refer to contract ID #T1572 for detailed information on ISP contract vendors.
- If the national or State contract providers do not provide a local phone number, look for local ISP's in phone books or in other local resources. The local school district or library may also be able to provide access service.
- If the local unit is planning to buy less than unlimited service, be aware that not all vendors provide the service. MSN provides metered (hourly) service that meets the GovConnect grant minimum of 20 hours per month. Others provide different levels of service at different fees.
- When buying ISP service, be sure to check how the vendor accepts payment. Many will only accept credit cards, which local units are not authorized (at this time) to use for purchases. In that case, the local unit may want to consider reimbursing an employee who pays for the service personally, otherwise, make sure the vendor will accept a local unit voucher. Payment in advance of receiving the service is permitted, as this can be considered as a subscription service (like a magazine or membership).

**Grant Application Requirements**

To receive a GovConnect Grant for an eligible local officer, applicants are required to complete the enclosed Grant Package and return it to the Division of Local Government Services. The package includes the following requirements:

1. That the governing body of the local unit adopt a resolution that is identical or substantially similar to the sample resolution that is enclosed with the grant application package. The resolution must be passed by a majority of the full membership of the governing body. The resolution must be signed and sealed by the Municipal Clerk or Clerk to the Board of Chosen Freeholders.
2. Two completed GovConnect Grant Eligibility Statement's certifying and attesting that both the local unit and local officer meet the eligibility requirements as described under the eligibility requirements section of this Notice. Eligibility is subject to verification by the Division.

### **Terms and Conditions**

1. **Method of Payment:** DLGS will reimburse expenses for qualified purchases up to the amounts allowed under Grant Elements. Local units are permitted and encouraged to add local funding to acquire equipment and services over the minimum requirement.
2. **Purchases:** to be eligible for reimbursement, all purchases must be made between 9/5/01 and 12/31/01.
3. **Request for Payment:** the local unit must submit a Reimbursement Request form and copies of paid vouchers for the purchase of qualified equipment, software or training.
4. **Reimbursement:** all reimbursement requests must be postmarked by 2/28/02.
5. **Registration:** the local officer must enroll on the GovConnect website by 12/31/01. The local officer is required to check the site on a regular basis,

pursuant to the GovConnect Usage Policies.

6. **Indemnification:** the local unit shall hold the State harmless from damages to real or tangible property.
7. **Equipment:** the local unit agrees to maintain the computer in working condition to ensure the local officer has timely access to the system.
8. **Usage:** Users are subject to GovConnect Usage Policies.

