

The people who will write it for you, at no charge

There are forty-five of them across the Delta, your dues already pay for them, and most small cities call them too late or not at all.

ONE DEAL

There are forty-five Local Development Districts across the Delta Regional Authority's eight states, covering 252 counties and parishes. DRA's own funding notices tell applicants to contact theirs — for information about the notice, and for help developing the application.

In Mississippi and Tennessee you will hear them called Planning and Development Districts. Same thing.

ONE LESSON

Your district will write routine applications for you, and your dues already paid for it.

This is the single most under-used resource in rural economic development, and the reason is not mysterious. A small city has a clerk, a mayor with another job, and a public works director who is also the water operator. Nobody's job title says grants. So the notice comes out, everyone agrees it is worth a try, and it sits until the week it closes — at which point the district gets a phone call asking for a miracle.

The districts are not miracle workers and they are not staffed for a surge. What they are extremely good at is the routine application, done early, with your numbers already in hand.

Two things follow from that, and they are worth saying plainly.

First, call them before the notice, not after. Ask what is coming, what they think you would be competitive for, and what they need from you. A district that has your audit, your population figures and your project list on file in March is a district that can act in August.

Second, know where their capacity ends. A district serving a dozen member governments cannot write twelve competing applications to the same fund with equal enthusiasm — nobody could. And there are pieces most districts do not staff at all: a three-statement financial model, a benefit-cost analysis for a mitigation application, a low-income housing tax credit stack, a power and energisation screen for a large-load site.

That is the honest line. **Routine applications: your district, free. Overflow and specialist pieces: somebody else, priced.** Anyone who tells you they should replace your district is selling you something you already own.

ONE MOVE

Call your development district this week — not about a specific notice, just to ask what is open and what is coming. Ask them one question at the end: *what do you wish member governments sent you earlier?*

Then send them that.

Sources: Delta Regional Authority Community Infrastructure Fund programme page and Notice of Funding Availability materials, as published at 18 August 2026. Confirm any application deadline with your Local Development District — DRA reviews applications on a schedule that has changed between cycles.

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