

## Support Connecticut Small Business 2022 RFP Conference

Department of Economic and Community Development

February 16, 2022

### Questions and Answers:

Will you accept collaborative proposals? If so, can an organization be listed as a partner on more than one proposal?

*Yes. Collaborative proposals will be accepted. If an organization is contemplating partnering with multiple entities, they should ensure that capacity exists to fulfill the obligations of all proposals.*

Is the minimum grant amount \$1 million over 5 years?

*Yes.*

Given the initial proposal was a grant and was awarded to a company outside of CT. Do you for see changing the scope of this grant again?

*The beneficiaries of the program should be Connecticut small businesses.*

If a TA program is associated with loan originations for the other part of this program, will the lender originating the loan be given "right of first refusal" to provide TA?

*DECD will provide more details about the Small Business Support Program, for which an RFP was released in 2021, at the information sessions to be held with the selected vendor for that program.*

Do you have a preference for the grants - whether they are given outright or have a repayment component?

*DECD does not have a strong point of view on this question. Organizations should propose a grant program they feel will meet the needs of small businesses.*

What are you considering the start date for budget purposes? Beginning of state fiscal? This spring? Other?

*DECD hopes to move quickly through this process, and is targeting a date in May or June. DECD will clarify and respond to this question with more detail.*

Is there guidance on how much funding should go toward TA capacity and how much for grants to businesses?

*No, organizations should propose a program they feel will meet the needs of businesses.*

Do we need to be registered in the state contracting portal to apply?

*No, but DECD recommends that prospective respondents register with CTsource, the State Contracting Portal, to receive updates and information about this RFP and future RFP opportunities.*

If there are many proposals, will DECD consider negotiating of a “scaled down” proposal instead of rejecting it outright?

*Yes.*

Would you like to see the grant recipients provide a match?

*DECD is always looking to maximize private funds. That has been a focus, and if there is a leverage of state funds that clearly is a positive. However, we understand that will not work for every specific proposal. So matching funds are not required but it will be a factor in how DECD decides to allocate funding.*

A follow-up to the earlier question regarding timing: In the RFP, April 15th is expressed as the 'Contract Start Date.' Would programs be expected to begin at that time or later?

*DECD hopes to move quickly through this process and is targeting a date of May or June.*

How diverse will the deciding team be?

*DECD is still formulating the RFP evaluation team.*

Are you looking for statewide or open to more local?

*Both are acceptable.*

You mentioned 50% of grants should be to women/minority/veteran/disabled/distressed, is this for TA as well?

*Yes, this allocation of resources should apply to technical assistance as well as grant funding.*

Please describe the evaluation rubric.

*The measures for evaluation are listed in the RFP on page 14.*

How many grants do you anticipate making? Will "payments" related to this RFP be considered grants, fees or both?

*The number of awards will be determined based on the number of accepted proposals and the size of the individual programs. DECD does anticipate making multiple awards.*

Regarding the proposed program's requirement that at least 50% of the funding be directed to minority-, woman-, disabled-, and veteran-owned businesses, and businesses located in distressed municipalities: For TA, will this be measured: By client engagements? By hours of service? Or another measure?

*Organizations can recommend measures they believe will accurately gauge the effectiveness of technical assistance and DECD will formalize those metrics during the negotiation process.*

May a proposer make a modification to the selected consultants during the five-year contract, taking advantage of opportunities/new consultants in the small business eco-system and/or eliminating a consultant that is not fulfilling the required outcomes?

*Yes, with the approval of DECD.*

Are TA services to non-profit businesses permitted under this RFP?

*Yes.*

For lenders participating in the NDC lending portal, will there be additional monies within the NDC-managed program related to the provision of TA (as it occurs in other NDC-managed programs, such as Flex Fund).

*This will be addressed during the informational session with NDC.*

Please confirm that the source of referrals for TA is not exclusive to those entering through the "NDC" portal and may originate from other referral sources or identified needs by the TA provider.

*Yes, technical assistance referrals may come from sources other than the new NDC program.*

Is it a five-year program (meaning extending to 3/31/2027) or is it really a 4.25-year program ending on June 30, 2026?

*It will be a five-year program, with the exact dates to be determined.*

While the RFP says monthly reporting, can that be changed to quarterly reporting to allow for accurate and timely data gathering/reporting by the TA provider/grantor, especially when the small business/start-up input is needed, allowing them the time necessary to respond?

*Monthly reporting will be required.*

When do you realistically expect to (1) select the winning proposals and (2) start the programs?

*Please refer to question 6.*