



State of Connecticut  
Department of Developmental Services

**DDS**

Jordan A. Scheff  
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo  
Deputy Commissioner

**Operations Memo 2024-22**

**TO:** DDS Qualified Providers

**FROM:** Sean Bannon, Director, Operations Center

**CC:** Jordan Scheff, Commissioner; Elisa Velardo, Deputy Commissioner; Katie Rock-Burns, Chief of Staff; Nicholas Jerard, CFO; Amber Carter, Director, Employment & Day Services Unit Regional Directors; Private ARDs; Resource Administrators; The Alliance, The ARC CT

**DATE:** May 31, 2024

**RE:** Provider Business Enterprise Pilot

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS), as an Employment First Agency, stands firm in its commitment to assisting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) actualize their employment goals. This includes supporting pathways to employment for all individuals served by the Department. DDS also recognizes that employment encompasses a wide range of options, including self-employment.

Effective June 3, 2024, DDS Qualified Provider Agencies that want to start a new or enhance a current Provider-led business enterprise can apply for a grant of up to \$65,000. Applicants are expected to demonstrate a viable business plan that clearly identifies pathways to Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) opportunities for individuals with IDD.

Awards will be subject to approval by the DDS Provider Business Enterprise Review Team. This team is tasked with reviewing submissions to ensure applications meet the requirements and guidelines as outlined below.

**This opportunity is pursuant to the availability of funds.** Awards are contingent upon approval and availability of funding. **As noted, this is subject to change.**

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Under the conditions and guidelines specified below, grant funds up to \$65,000 toward the startup/expansion costs of a Provider-led business enterprise can be requested. **Each request must meet the following criteria:**

### 1. Use Requirements:

- A. Funding shall align with DDS guidelines regarding Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) and is limited to Qualified Provider Agencies that support or lead to CIE opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities supported by the Department.

### 2. Submission summary criteria and review requirements

- A. All submissions must be complete and answer all questions in full to be applicable for review from the DDS Provider Business Enterprise Review Team. **The application template must not be altered or substituted.**
- B. In addition to the application, Providers **must include a detailed accounting of how the grant funds will be spent** according to *Acceptable Use of Funds* as outlined below, a business plan, and articles of incorporation (if applicable).
- C. Providers must submit their application and supporting documentation for approval via email to [dds.employment-dayservices@ct.gov](mailto:dds.employment-dayservices@ct.gov) by **June 14, 2024, at 5:00pm**. Applications received for this grant after the deadline will be reviewed in the next fiscal year 2025, based on fund availability.
- D. Submissions will be reviewed and approved in accordance with the DDS Provider Business Enterprise Funding Guidelines and Rubric housed in the Employment & Day Services Unit.
- E. Provider agencies will receive an approval/denial letter by **June 21, 2024**.

### 3. Acceptable Use of Funds

- A. Funds may be used toward costs associated with Business Enterprise start-up/expansion. This includes, but is not limited to, procurement of equipment and/or operating space/location, training, technology systems, research and/or marketing or consulting fees necessary to create the business model identified in the application.

### 4. Unacceptable Use of Funds

- B. Funds **are not permitted** to be used toward wages or salaries of individuals supported by the agency. Funds cannot be used for wages for support staff being compensated concurrently through a waived service (ISE, IDV, etc.).
- C. Funds **are not permitted** to be used toward **debt repayment**.

### 5. Ongoing Commitments/Reporting Requirements

- A. Ongoing semi-annual reporting to DDS, as well as targeted program evaluation, data sharing, and routine quality monitoring and improvement practices associated with the business.
- B. Provider agencies will meet all legal requirements set forth by the State of Connecticut.
- C. Funds not spent within the parameters of the grant requirements must be refunded to the Department.

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