

ADDENDUM 4

Entrepreneurship Assistance Centers Program RFA 2024

Responses to Written Questions

1.	We received this just a few days short of the session that was held. If there is any information we may be interested in the program.	All information regarding the EAC RFA2024, including the Live Information Session on May 3, 2024 or any additional information will always be posted to the RFA on the New York State Contract Reporter (NYSCR) A free account must first be created to access contents of the NYSCR. All information and updated notifications about the EAC RFA2024 will be posted here. This RFA can be searched under the issue date 04/26/2024 or under the agency “Empire State Development” with the title “Entrepreneurship Assistance Centers Program, RFA”.
2.	Appendix D: Diversity Practices Questionnaire –is linked incorrectly to Diversity Scoring section.	<p>Please refer to Addendum #3 of this EAC RFA2024:</p> <p>The link to Diversity Document OSCD-1 form should be completed and submitted with your application <u>in lieu</u> of the Diversity Practices Questionnaire – Appendix D.</p> <p>Note also that this link is already included on page 19: APPENDIX C: Administrative Proposal (Contractual Procurement Forms and Requirements – separate file)</p> <p>#4. Non Discrimination and Contractor and Supplier Diversity Forms - https://esd.ny.gov/sites/default/files/OCSD-1-Policy-Statement.pdf</p>
3.	<p>In Section 1.A. of the RFA (Project Summary, page 3), it states that the grant award will be \$173,000 and that “The Project will commence July 1, 2024 and will be renewed for up to two (2) additional years...”</p> <p>Does this mean that the \$173,000 grant amount can be awarded again for each of those two additional years, for a total of \$519,000 potentially awardable to each Center for this round of funding?</p>	<p>Please refer to Addendum 2 – for a copy of the PowerPoint for the EAC LIVE INFORMATION SESSION on May 3rd, 2024.</p> <p>This RFA is a multi-three (3) year contract:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 of 3: is a 14-month contract starting 7/01/2024 through 8/31/2025 • Year 2 of 3: is a 12-month contract starting 9/01/2025 through 8/31/2026 • Year 3 of 3 is a 12-month contract starting 9/01/2026 through 8/31/2027

<p>3.</p>	<p>Or is the \$173,000 spread out over all three years, and represents the total award per Center in this round of funding?</p>	<p><u>Designation Period, Contract Amount, and Anticipated Funding</u></p> <p>All proposals should reflect ESD funding in the amount up to \$173,000 per year. Up to twenty-six (26) awards may be made in this competition. The institutions awarded an EAC designation under this competition shall be designated for a period of up to three years, provided the EAC’s performance is deemed satisfactory by ESD, in ESD’s sole discretion, at each annual evaluation.</p> <p>The contract is anticipated to commence on July 1, 2024. The EAC will be eligible to receive up to \$173,000 annually, subject to the availability of State funds. Proposals submitted for greater than \$173,000 in annual ESD support will be rejected without review. If funding availability increases or decreases during the designation period, ESD will work with designees to adjust budgets accordingly.</p> <p>ESD shall provide up to \$173,000 yearly in funding for reimbursable expenses (or a pro-rata of the individual EAC allocation if funding levels change), provided the EAC’s performance is deemed satisfactory by ESD, in ESD’s sole discretion, and subject to the availability of State funds.</p> <p>The amount of ESD funds reimbursed to the award recipient will be based on the amount of eligible matching funds expended. ESD reserves the right to adjust the amount of an award recipient’s funding based upon the availability of State funds, EAC’s economic impact performance including assistance to small New York State businesses, and the EAC’s ability to meet the matching funds requirements.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Can we apply for less than \$173,000 and adjust the program goals accordingly to reflect the low-density population in rural Upstate New York? If so, is there a minimum amount that must be applied for?</p>	<p>The grant amount is \$173,000 for FY2024-2025 year. Grant amounts for following 2 years are anticipated to be of similar amounts as per response to Question #3 above regarding the Designation Period, Contract Amount, and Anticipated Funding.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Section B, no. 17: if we haven’t received any ESD funding before, do we list funding from other State agencies?</p>	<p>This section is for disclosing any grant funding only from New York State Empire State Development or ESD.</p>

6.	<p>If awarded, will ESD provide all policies and procedures as well as contract templates for all activities associated with the EAC, or we will be required to pay and have these policies and contracts developed for us? Can such fees be included in the budget?</p>	<p>If awarded, the recipient will receive an Award Notification letter; ESD will follow up with a formal Grant Disbursement Agreement (“GDA”) that must be signed by legally authorized signatories of the organization. This contract will be deemed a fully executed contract once ESD countersigns. This contract will identify tasks and timelines and all required exhibits. All necessary policy documents will be provided along with all attending reporting templates. There is no additional charge for ESD documentation. Further instruction for the grant contract will be provided to award recipients.</p>
7.	<p>Will ESD provide sample forms for collecting and reporting data, or will we be required to create such forms ourselves? Is this included in the EAC portal?</p>	<p>ESD provides all forms for intake information, and reporting data. Data collection is required and done via the EAC Database portal. Training is provided on all required documentation and database instruction to all designated awardees of this grant.</p>
8.	<p>Can we use this ESD funding for cash prizes for the pitch competition?</p>	<p>ESD will further review and work with each award recipient’s budget. How an organization structures this budget will depend on each organization’s implementation strategy for executing the intentions of this grant. Grant awardees should have sufficient staffing and consultants with specific subject matter expertise to perform and accomplish the goals of this program. Other areas that can be considered to augment the EAC program can come from Cash or InKind match.</p>
9.	<p>Can we use ESD funding to pay program participant’s fees for certification such as M/WBE?</p>	<p>There are no fees associated with NYS MWBE certification applications.</p>
10.	<p>An annual conference was mentioned in the info session. How much is this expected to cost those attending?</p>	<p>The EAC Annual Training & Awards Conference is a train-the-trainers symposium for EAC program staff. These expenses can be charged to Technical Assistance expenses. EAC training conference locations are rotated around NY state so local entrepreneurs can be recognized and honored from that region’s Centers. Each EAC should send at least 2 EAC staff to this training. The FY2024 conference is anticipated to be held in Buffalo, NY for FY2024. Costs pertaining to this conference typically are for hotel for 2 or 3 days (at government rate of \$85/night/person), travel, and approximately \$400/person for meals for 2 days and 1 evening.</p>

11.	Is there a standard fringe rate?	Standard rates for federal and state taxes apply, and your organizations typical benefits for insurance. Please identify each fringe benefit.
12.	Can you further clarify what is considered as technical assistance for budgeting purposes? It seems that this would be covered under salary, consultants, or administration depending on the type of assistance.	TA or Technical assistance would be direct costs for the operations of the EAC program that would not include salaries and fringe, consultant fees, or the indirect costs which should be charged under Administration Expenses.
13.	Do our trainers need specialized certifications?	Trainers are expected to possess subject matter expertise in the particular area they are to be training participants in. It is expected that persons providing specific professional skills such as legal or accounting training will have the necessary professional training and/or certifications.
14.	<p>Strategic Partners</p> <p>Are we required to submit Letters of Support from the community/strategic partners as part of the application or listing their names would suffice?</p>	There is no specified requirement for L.O.S.'s but may help in verifying your organization's stature and presence within the communities being served.
15.	<p>Budget Question:</p> <p>Please can you share what are the eligible expenses under Technical Assistance and Administration budget lines?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Please can you share a few examples of eligible expenses? ii) What would be considered as ineligible expenses under these budget lines? (Technical Assistance and Administration) 	<p>Please refer to answers to Question #12 above. Ineligible expenses would be any costs that are not directly associated for attaining the goals outlined on page 4 of the RFA.</p> <p>Some samples of ineligible expenses may be construction costs, or equipment costs, or food, snacks, or meals except for approved catering costs of the EAC conference.</p>

16.	What is the difference between Technical Assistance and Administration?	<p>TA or Technical Assistance will be those direct costs in the operation and implementation of the EAC program that are not specifically salaried personnel or consultants.</p> <p>Administrative costs will refer to the operating costs for the entire organization where each program has a pro-rated share of the costs such as but not limited to the organization's telecommunications costs, insurance costs, legal, or account auditing costs, general maintenance, and supplies costs. Your EAC program staff should be working in coordination with your organization's finance and accounting teams regarding the documentation of expenses for this program.</p>
17.	Can we request the 10% IDC under the administration budget line?	Components that make up the IDC or indirect costs must be outlined. Refer also to Question #16 above.
18.	We have a federally negotiated indirect rate for grants and contracts. Can we use that to meet any portion of the match requirement for this RFA? Also, is there a ceiling for this or can we use our full IDC rate?	If your organization has a federal indirect rate for grants, you must provide the documentation that makes up the IDC. If the IDC involves the costs of all administrative staff and administrative operating costs, then those administrative personnel or shared operating costs cannot be also charged to the line items for Salary and Fringe, professional consultant, or Technical Assistance costs. Please refer to Question #16 above.
19.	<i>"In Salaries & Fringe, allocate for a dedicated full-time program manager."</i> Please can you clarify what you mean by full-time; do we need to employ a person whose 100% effort is dedicated only to the EAC program? If so, can we charge their full salaries and fringes to the ESD EAC program funds?	Please also refer to Question #8. Any staff person assigned to the EAC program that is full-time or 100%, then that person(s) total salary and fringe should be included on the salaries and fringe line. Program staff should work in conjunction with their respective finance staff to avoid any confusion when allocating staff costs to each of your organization's programs.
20.	Technical Assistance Goals <i>"Number of Active Mentors – 4"</i> Please can you provide a definition of what ESD considers as "active mentors;" any minimum requirements such as mentoring hours, number of mentees etc.?	The number of mentors are counted as active for the current fiscal year of the program when they are matched with a client in the current fiscal year of the program.

21.	<p>Application Section C Authorized Signatory On the application form, Section C, Can the Project Director of the grant application serve as the Second Authorized Signatory?</p>	<p>The ESD contract must be signed by the legally authorized officer(s) of the organization. That executive may authorize a secondary authorized signatory by specifying and naming such person as having such authority.</p>
22.	<p>Submission Requirements/Procurement Forms, Page 15-19 of the RFA Comment - There is a difference between what's asked on the EAC Organization Information, Page 9, #19, and the Submission Requirements list on Page 19 of the RFA regarding the financial statements requested. Please can you clarify is it "the last two years" or "the last 3 years of financial statements" that we need to provide.</p>	<p>Page 9. #19 under <u>Organization Information</u> – please extract the basic balance sheet information from your organization’s most recently completed financial audits – indicating the year covered – is the same information from the audited financial statements provided in #8 and #9 of the backup documentation.</p> <p><u>Page 19 for the list of required backup documentation:</u> #8 – Most current audited financials – is a copy of your organization’s current FY2024 financial position (a financial statement from your accountants) #9 – copies of last two years of your organization’s completed Financial Audits.</p>
23.	<p>Please can you confirm the procurement forms required for this application include only the ones listed on Pages 15 and 19 of the RFA and no additional forms such as the Iran Divestment Form, EO-16 certification, EO-177 certification, etc. are also required?</p>	<p>This RFA does not require forms for the Iran Divestment Form, the EO16 or E)-177 forms. These forms are typically required for the GDA contract or the Grants Disbursement Agreement.</p>
24.	<p>Does the economic impact include startup and existing businesses?</p>	<p>The economic impact goals shown in the RFA are the combined goals for startup and existing businesses. These will be more fully defined in the GDA or the Grants Disbursement Agreement contract.</p>
25.	<p>New Businesses registered does this include sole proprietorship that are filing a schedule C?</p>	<p>Sole proprietors who file additional income from their same purported business on an IRS schedule C with their personal tax returns are considered existing businesses. They would be counted as a startup if they filed the schedule C within the current fiscal year of the EAC contract.</p>

26.	What is the definition of active mentor?	See Question #20
27.	What constitutes a Mentor/Mentee Match?	A mentee/mentor match would be counted as a match for a particular contract year if that match occurred within the dates of the contract year in question.