NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Empire State Development

New York State MWBE Business Growth Accelerator (BGA) Program Design and Implementation For The Capital District And Mohawk Valley Regions
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Release Date: November 1, 2024

The following is a list of responses to questions submitted by prospective respondents to the New York State MWBE Business Growth Accelerator (BGA) Program Design and Implementation For The Capital District And Mohawk Valley Regions, RFP. A copy of the RFP is available at:

https://esd.ny.gov/doing-business-ny/requests-proposals/new-york-state-mwbe-business-growth-accelerator-bga-program

No.	Question	Answer
1	**The RFP seeks a BGA operating in the "Capital District." Is this synonymous with New York State's "Capital Region?"**	Yes, for more information on the geographic partition of the regions, please visit: https://esd.ny.gov/regions.
2	**Is a recording of the November 19, 2024 virtual pre-submission conference available and will there be an opportunity to attend a similar meeting?**	No, we did not record the pre-submission conference, and there will be no additional pre-submission conference for the RFP However, we posted the PowerPoint presentation and all answers to the questions that were asked prior to, during, and after the pre-submission conference to the RFP webpage.

No.	Question	Answer
3	**Will you share the presentation slides and a list of attendees after the meeting?**	Yes, the presentation slides and the answers to all questions asked prior to, during, and after the pre-submission conference will be posted on the RFP webpage. We will also share them with all the attendees to the pre-submission conference. This ensures that all potential bidders have equal access to the information discussed during the session. However, the DMWBD will not share the list of potential bidders who attended the pre-submission conference.
4	**Is there any flexibility in the required number of participants (25 per region)? What happens if we cannot recruit the minimum number of qualified firms?**	The requirement for a minimum of 25 participants per region is a critical program metric. This number was defined based on projected available number of NYS MWBEs certified with a potential growth-oriented profile in the regions. However, if an incubator encounters challenges in meeting this requirement, they must notify the Division of Minority and Women's Business Development (DMWBD) in advance and clearly explain the rationale in their proposal. They must demonstrate they can still deliver a high-quality program with a slightly smaller cohort. The DMWBD may provide guidance or approve adjustments based on the region's unique circumstances and the pool of eligible MWBE firms. **Reference:** • Page 26, Section VIII of the RFP.

No.	Question	Answer
5	**The RFP mentions that the contract is for a fixed value but also mentions the evaluation of the cost proposal. Can you clarify how the cost proposal will be evaluated and what key components you are looking for in a strong proposal?**	While the total award amount for the BGA 3.0 program is fixed ($200,000 for one region, $400,000 for two regions), we will be evaluating the cost proposals to ensure they are reasonable, allocate funds effectively, and demonstrate good stewardship of resources. Key components we'll be looking for include: • Clear budget breakdown and justification for each expense category (e.g., personnel, training materials, and event organization). • Prioritization of direct program costs over administrative overhead. • Justifications for each cost item, demonstrating value and efficiency. • Cost-effectiveness and alignment with program goals. **Reference:** • Page 32, Section XII (Cost Proposal).

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No.	Question	Answer
6	**How can incubators verify that MWBE firms have secured private contracts, as required for reporting and incentive metrics?**	Incubators can verify private contracts through a combination of methods: • **Self-certification:** Obtain a signed statement from the MWBE firm confirming the contract award and its value. • **Documentation:** Request copies of the contract or purchase orders as supporting evidence. • **Third-party verification:** If necessary, contact the contracting entity directly to confirm the contract details. These verifications should be included in quarterly reports and must clearly link the program's support to the MWBE firm's success. **Reference:** • Page 14-15, Section V (Program Reporting).
7	**We submitted two questions before the conference. Will we be able to see all questions submitted by other attendees and the answers provided?**	Yes, all questions submitted prior to, during, and after the pre-submission conference, along with their answers, will be compiled and posted on the RFP webpage. This ensures transparency and equal access to information for all potential bidders. **Reference:** • Page 1, Section C of the RFP.
8	**Can you provide us with a list of the vendors who attended this meeting?**	No, the DMWBD will not share the list of potential bidders who attended the pre-submission conference.

No.	Question	Answer
9	**Is this RFP a rebid of a previous RFP, or is this an initial submission to narrow down finalists for a subsequent selection process?**	This RFP is subsequent to an initial BGA 3.0 RFP in which no award to a qualified bidder was made for the Capital District and Mohawk Valley regions.
10	**Do we have to bid on both regions (Capital District and Mohawk Valley), or can we bid on only one?**	Bidders can choose to submit proposals for one region (Capital District or Mohawk Valley) or both. Proposals should clearly indicate the region(s) being targeted and the corresponding strategies for implementation. **Reference:** • Page 1, Section II (Overview).
11	**Does the scoring criteria give more weight to proposals from incubators that are certified as MWBE/SDVOB/LGBT-owned/8A businesses?**	While certification as an MWBE and SDVOB business is not a mandatory requirement, such certifications may align with the program's commitment to diversity and inclusion, which is considered during the evaluation process. **Reference:** • Page 29, Section XI (Selection Criteria).

No.	Question	Answer
12	**We're concerned that the 18-month program duration may not be enough time to onboard participants, provide training, identify suitable state solicitations, and help them secure contracts. Is there any flexibility in the requirement that contract wins must be from state opportunities?**	The 18-month program duration is designed to provide ample time for onboarding, training, and assisting MWBEs in securing contracts. The program strongly encourages MWBEs to secure state contracts, as this aligns with the program's objectives. However, incubators are encouraged to support MWBEs in identifying and pursuing private contracts as well, particularly if state opportunities are limited during the program period. The ultimate goal is to help MWBEs grow and sustain their business by creating jobs and growing New York State's economy. **Reference:** • Page 22, Section VI (Program Metrics).
13	**If awarded the contract, will you provide us with a list of eligible companies to recruit for the program?**	While the DMWBD will support incubators by providing available data and resources, it is ultimately the incubator's responsibility to identify and recruit eligible MWBE firms. The DMWBD will share an updated NYS MWBE-certified list and potential candidates to aid in the recruitment process. Incubators are also encouraged to identify and recruit any potential firm(s) that are not yet certified. The DMWBD will promptly review their certification applications in accordance with Article 15-A. However, any non-certified firm(s) the incubators allow in the program will not count toward the cohort required number and incentive funding if the firm(s) are not certified by the end of the program. **Reference:** • Page 11, Section III.I (Participants Selection and Criteria).