

## 50 N.J.R. 2564(b)

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### PUBLIC NOTICES

#### Reporter

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### Agency

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**OTHER AGENCIES > NEW JERSEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

### Text

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#### Notice of Funding Availability

#### Innovation Challenge Program

**Take notice** that the New Jersey Economic Development Authority ("EDA" or "Authority") hereby announces the availability of grants of up to \$ 100,000 each to communities for economic development plans to catalyze planning and key investments to position their city and region to augment their innovation ecosystem.

**Name of program:** Innovation Challenge Program.

**Purpose:** In recent decades, New Jersey, and most importantly its cities, has lagged its competitors for developing the kind of innovation-centric real estate, talent, and capital strategies that have led to outsized job creation in a range of fields that are poised to dominate the 21st century economy. To expand the reach of the innovation economy, more work is needed to facilitate major investments in all of New Jersey's urban centers, with a focus on creating partnerships between the public sector, institutions of higher education, innovative real estate developers, and entrepreneurial private sector leaders.

New Jersey and its cities have limited access to incubators and other supportive real estate components that foster the growth and development of start-up ecosystems. New Jersey's cities also need support to develop infrastructure strategies to support innovation (that is, mobility, walkability, bike-ability, transit-oriented development, fiber/broadband, utility infrastructure).

On July 17, 2018, the EDA issued a Request for Qualifications/Proposals (RFQ/P) to New Jersey municipal and county governments for the award of contracts of up to \$ 100,000 each to the highest scoring proposals to produce a plan that will serve to catalyze planning and key investments to position their city and region to augment their innovation ecosystem, will inform the Authority's own plans for economic development activities and programs, and will be shared by the Authority with other local governmental entities to foster further innovation across the State. Based on the proposals received in response to the RFQ/P, on September 13, 2018, nine contracts of \$ 100,000 each were approved by the EDA Board for the following municipalities/counties: City of Bridgeton, City of New Brunswick, Passaic County, City of Trenton, Atlantic County, City of Atlantic City, Camden County, Union Township, and Monmouth County.

Due to the impressive quality of all proposals received in response to the RFQ/P, the EDA's review of the prior method of soliciting proposals and needs across municipalities and counties, and the capacity of the Authority to fund additional plans, the EDA is making additional funding available through the Innovation Challenge Program, providing grants of up to \$ 100,000 each to be awarded to the municipal or county proposals that achieve a requisite score based on publicly available scoring criteria.

**Eligibility:** Eligible applicants must be:

-- New Jersey municipal government (a proposal submitted by a single municipality) -- must represent total population of 25,000 or more.

-- New Jersey county government (a proposal submitted by a single county).

-- Municipal partnership (two to four New Jersey municipalities partnering on a proposal) -- must represent total population of 25,000 or more.

-- Regional partnership (a New Jersey county partnering with another New Jersey county or a New Jersey municipality from a different county on a single proposal; or five or more New Jersey municipalities partnering on a single proposal) -- must represent total population of 100,000 or more.

Eligible applicants must provide a 20 percent match of the grant amount to be reinvested back into the planning project, which may be in the form of a financial contribution or a contribution of in-kind resources defined as non-monetary resources that will add value to or help advance the planning project.

In addition, proposals must include a higher education partnership, defined as a partnership with a public or private institution of higher education, to leverage external expertise to best achieve the goals of the Innovation Challenge Program. While all proposals are required to have a higher education partnership, preference will be given to proposals that include additional strategic partners. Partnerships must be formalized by a signed agreement, which can be conditional to a successful contract award.

The nine municipalities/counties that were awarded planning contracts through RFQ/P 081--Innovation Planning Challenge are not eligible to apply for the Innovation Challenge Program in a lead role, but may be included as a partner in applications where they play a non-lead role.

Finally, a municipality or a county may only submit one application each in a lead role, but can be included as a partner in additional applications where they play a non-lead role. A proposal on behalf of a county does not preclude a municipality within that county from submitting their own proposal.

**Amount of funding available:** Up to \$ 100,000 per eligible applicant is available through the program, which is funded through utilization of up to \$ 500,000 from the EDA's Economic Recovery Fund.

**Application fees:** There are no application fees associated with the Innovation Challenge Program.

**Procedure to apply:** Applications for the Innovation Challenge Program will be accepted on a rolling basis according to scoring criteria, and will be accepted for a period of no more than 60 days following the release of the application to the public and a deadline will be established, published, and communicated to interested parties based on the release date of the application.

Applications must include plans for specific deliverables, which must be completed six months after closing of funding agreement between the EDA and the recipient. Planning proposals may focus on any number of potential project types, including the following:

*Real Estate Development Projects* -- Planning for feasibility and development of projects that have commercial or mixed uses, including retail, office, hospitality, community, and industrial. Examples of projects may involve the construction or rehabilitation of commercial and mixed-use buildings for multi-tenant business development within an innovation economy industry, entities that provide necessary services to the innovation economy, industry

specialized laboratory, or research and development space to be used by a technology business. Projects may be stand-alone or distinct parts of a larger development.

*Infrastructure Projects* -- Planning for the development of infrastructure improvements or strategies that, when completed, will increase the innovation capacity of the municipality in which they are located. These projects can involve, but are not limited to, mobility, walkability, bike-ability, transit-oriented development, fiber-broadband capacity, and utility infrastructure.

*Workforce, Entrepreneurship Development or Training* -- Planning for programs or resources that would enhance the region's economic stability and prosperity by providing access to training or resources to produce more and better-prepared workers and expand entrepreneurship to support the innovation economy.

*Other* -- Any plan not specifically detailed above that addresses one or more of the Innovation Challenge Program goals are welcomed to expand an innovation economy that may not fall into the categories above.

Applications are available at: [www.njeda.com/InnovationChallenge](http://www.njeda.com/InnovationChallenge).

**Review and award process:** The EDA will evaluate applications on a first-come, first-served basis based on the date of receipt of completed applications, but no later than 60 days following release of an application or until the total funding pool is exhausted, whichever is sooner. The Authority will utilize a scoring committee to review applications based on publicly released scoring criteria and applications that achieve a minimum score will be recommended for approval by the EDA Board.