

**New Jersey Economic Development Authority**  
Grant Application for Innovation Challenge Program

**I. Background**

Governor Murphy has made reclaiming New Jersey's historical position as the capital of American Innovation and Invention a centerpiece of his Stronger and Fairer economic development agenda. 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.

Governor Murphy announced in March a vision for New Jersey's innovation economy, exemplified by the large-scale Innovation Hub in New Brunswick – but 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 which foster the growth and development of start-up ecosystems. New Jersey's cities also need support to develop infrastructure strategies to support innovation (i.e., mobility, walkability, bike-ability, transit-oriented development, fiber/broadband, water infrastructure).

On July 17, 2018, the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (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 from this pilot round of the "Innovation Challenge", 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, staff's review of the prior method of soliciting proposals and needs across municipalities and counties, and the capacity of EDA to fund additional plans, the Authority is making additional funding available in the form of a grant program called the Innovation Challenge Program, providing grants of up to \$100,000 each to be awarded to the municipal or county applications that achieve a requisite score based on publicly available scoring criteria.

EDA intends to award up to \$500,000, structured as grants of up to \$100,000 each, to the Municipal and/or County governments/partnerships, whose applications achieve a requisite score by demonstrating how its reports and/or plans will catalyze planning and key investments to position their city and region to augment their innovation ecosystem as outlined by the Authority in this application.

Applications will be accepted and reviewed on a first come, first served basis until either the \$500,000 application allotment has been exhausted, or 60 days after publication of notice and release of application (whichever is sooner).

## **II. Scope of Work**

The Authority is seeking applications from a New Jersey municipality, county, or municipal partnership with total population of 25,000 or more, or a regional partnership with a total population of 100,000 or more, to produce plans that will ultimately seek to position their city and region to augment their innovation ecosystem.

The goals of the Innovation Challenge include:

- Driving inclusive economic growth and increasing opportunities to build wealth
- Improving supportive infrastructure, such as broadband capacity, walkability, or access to public transit
- Growing the number of local small businesses
- Providing better access to STEM jobs and ladders of opportunity
- Attracting top talent and employers
- Increase commercial activity in under-developed metro areas
- Building an entrepreneurial culture

Plans must clearly identify how the plan will position the city or region to meet one or more goals of the Innovation Challenge and should also clearly demonstrate a viable path to bringing ideas to implementation and a collaborative stakeholder engagement process and strategy.

Applicants are free to use their expertise, may hire or subcontract with outside experts and consider any approach or combination of approaches to achieve the overall goal of augmenting a city or region's innovation ecosystem. Applications should identify the difficulty, challenge or issue that is impeding growth or expansion of the local or regional innovation economy or ecosystem and explain how the proposed plan to be produced as a result of this contract award would be used to identify or work toward a solution.

Applications must classify the planning project based on a defined project type or types, from the four categories below:

### *a. Real Estate Development*

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 multitenant 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 standalone or distinct parts of a larger development.

*b. Infrastructure*

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.

*c. 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.

*d. Other*

Any plan not specifically detailed above that addresses one or more of the Innovation Challenge goals. We welcome new approaches to expanding an innovation economy that do not fall into the categories above

### **III. Eligible Applicants**

Only a New Jersey local or county government or municipal partnership with a combined population of 25,000 or more, or regional partnership with a combined population of 100,000 or more is eligible to submit an application.

- **New Jersey municipal government** (an application submitted by a single municipality) – must represent total population of 25,000 or more.
- **New Jersey county government** (a single county – including municipalities within that county, acting as a partner, if applicable)
- **Municipal partnership** (two to four New Jersey municipalities partnering on an application) – 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 application; or five or more New Jersey municipalities partnering on a single application) – must represent total population of 100,000 or more.

In the case of a municipal or regional partnership, the partnership must designate ONE lead municipality or county government who will have the following responsibilities:

- Serve as the sole entity under whose name the application will be submitted.
- Serve as the sole entity with whom the Authority would execute a grant agreement (in the event of an application approval).
- Provide (directly or in coordination with other governmental partners) the 20% match (funding or in-kind resources).
- Serve as the sole entity receiving disbursements from the Authority per the terms of the grant agreement and distributing the disbursements among partners, as necessary, to execute the planning project.
- Serve as the sole entity responsible for meeting the deliverables of the contract.
- 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.

A lead municipality or a county may only submit one application each, but an application on behalf of a county does not preclude a municipality within that county from submitting its own application.

The Authority will NOT consider applications submitted by joint ventures, in the performance of the Work for this Application. As discussed in Section III, partnerships between governmental entities are permitted, however an application by such partnerships must be submitted by the designated lead governmental entity only.

Applicants shall note that any and all reference to “joint venture(s)”, “joint venture partner(s) / “joint venture partnership(s)” in any documents included as a part of the Application specifications, exhibits or attachments shall be read as though the words are stricken and removed.

#### **IV. Higher Education Partnerships**

To be considered for an Innovation Challenge grant, a municipality, county, municipal partnership, or regional partnership must have a higher education partnership, defined as an established partnership with a public or private institution of higher education, to leverage external expertise to best achieve the goals of the Innovation Planning Challenge. This partnership must be formalized by a signed agreement, which can be conditional to a successful grant award, that outlines the roles and responsibilities of the parties, demonstrates collaboration in working towards an innovation ecosystem change, and, if applicable, details any funding or other resource commitments from the higher education partner to the application. While all applications are required to have a higher education partnership, preference will be given to applications that include additional strategic partners, and applications that include additional funding commitments provided by or facilitated through the public or private institution of higher education and strategic partner, if applicable.

There are no limits to the number of applications that a public or private higher-education institution may be involved in (for example, a university may be a partner for any number of applications submitted by individual municipalities), but the higher education partner must operate in accordance with the applicable compliance process of the lead municipality or county under which the higher-education institution is selected, and the lead municipality or county will be responsible for collecting compliance documentation from the higher education partner in accordance with any applicable procurement process.

## **V. Strategic Partners**

In addition to the required higher education partnership, a municipality, county, municipal partnership, or regional partnership is encouraged, but not required, to enter into a partnership with other entities, to leverage external expertise to best achieve the goals of the Innovation Challenge Program. This partnership must be formalized by a signed agreement, which can be conditional to a successful grant award, that outlines the roles and responsibilities of the parties, demonstrates collaboration in working towards an innovation ecosystem and change, and, if applicable, details any funding or other resource commitments from the strategic partner to the application.

While all applications are required to have a higher education partnership, preference will be given to applications that include additional strategic partners, and applications that include additional funding commitments provided by or facilitated through the higher education and strategic partner, if applicable

Strategic partners may include, but are not limited to:

- Academic medical research centers
- Hospitals
- Non-profit organizations
- Foundations
- Faith-based or community organizations
- Private businesses
- CDFI's or other non-profit economic development organizations
- Incubators and/or accelerators

There are no limits to the number of applications that a single strategic partner may be involved in (for example, a foundation may be a strategic partner for any number of applications submitted by individual municipalities), but the strategic partner must operate in accordance with the applicable compliance process of the lead municipality or county under which the strategic partner is selected, and the lead municipality or county will be responsible for collecting compliance documentation from the strategic partner in accordance with any applicable procurement process.

## **VI. Match Requirement**

To be considered eligible for a contract award, applications must demonstrate ability to provide a 20 percent matching contribution of the total grant amount to be reinvested back into the planning project.

The 20 percent match can be in the form of a financial contribution, or a contribution of in-kind resources, or a combination, thereof. In-kind resources are defined as non-monetary resources that will add value and help advance the planning project.

As part of the required documentation to accompany an application, applicants must demonstrate the ability to provide either a 20 percent financial match or demonstrate that the in-kind resources that are being dedicated to the project have a value equivalent to 20 percent of the funding request. This could be in the form of hours dedicated to the planning project across proposed hourly rates, or the value of goods or services being provided to support the planning project.

## **VII. Technical Proposal**

The Applicant shall describe its approach to undertaking a planning project as outlined in **Section II – Scope of Work** by clearly explaining how the planning project will work to accomplish one or more of the Innovation Challenge goals.

As part of demonstrating understanding of the requirements of this Application, and its ability to successfully complete all aspects of the planning project within the contract term, the application should contain, at a minimum, the required information identified below (as applicable):

- Completed Application Information Form (Attachment A), and any additional information related to the Scope of Work, not specifically requested on Attachment A, to be submitted with the Application.
- Completed Grant Funding Proposal (Attachment B). Schedule must demonstrate how the full project budget is being utilized, and that the final deliverable will be met within six (6) months of contract execution.
- Demonstration of the plan's ability to achieve one or more goals of the Innovation Challenge, as outlined in Scope of Work.
- Explanation of strength of established partnership(s) (higher education and other strategic, if applicable) within the Application, including:
  - Reputation, capacity, and proposed level of commitment from the partnering entity(ies).
  - Longevity of the partnerships beyond initial project planning stages.
  - Benefits and practical advantages of the partnership(s).

- Explanation of commitment of additional funding from higher education partners, strategic partners, or other outside sources, if applicable. Explanation should include:
  - Identification of specific sources of additional funding committed to the project, including amounts and any conditions that may be attached to those commitments.
  - If applicable, list of any other federal, state, or local funding commitments related to proposed project.
  
- Explanation of the presence and strength of a defined collaborative stakeholder engagement process and strategy, if applicable. Explanation should include:
  - Identification of stakeholders critical to the success of the project.
  - Identified roles stakeholders have in helping to achieve objectives.
  - Stakeholder engagement plan to define the type of relationship and engagement with individual stakeholders.
  - Communications channels / engagement techniques with stakeholders.
  
- Demonstration of the plan's ability to grow number of small businesses/attract employers within the municipality/region, including:
  - Identification of unique local barriers to the attraction of businesses and employers; and
  - Formulation of locality-specific potential solutions to address those barriers.
  - Discussion of pre-existing factors related to locality access (public transportation, parking, traffic, walkability, bike-ability) and means by which to improve and/or build upon those factors.
  
- Explanation of how plan will utilize solutions based on the use of new and emerging technologies. The following technologies to be considered, but not limited to:
  - Clean energy;
  - Smart transportation and/or parking;
  - Data collection and predictive analytics;
  - Smart infrastructure (such as sensors for potholes or sewage);
  - Mobile applications.
  
- Evidence of the application to demonstrate the potential for new jobs within or in support of an innovation industry including emerging technology and life sciences, digital media, clean technology/green energy, fin-tech, cyber-security, AI/AR, transportation-tech, etc.).
  
- Demonstration of ability to execute a planning project or viability of a planning project, including:
  - Discussion of outreach and communication to community, stakeholders, etc.
  - Discussion of the project's milestones and how they will be measurable and achievable.

- Discussion of experience in successful completion of planning projects similar in size and scope to the proposed project
  - Discussion of experience, capacity, and skills of planning team and/or consultants
  - If applicable, copy of any existing redevelopment plans impacting the proposed planning project area.
  - If applicable, any existing market and/or feasibility studies related to the application.
- Information reflecting 20 percent match, including:
    - If 20 percent match is financial, Total Plan Budget in Attachment B should include the 20% match. The application should also detail approximately when and how the 20% contribution will be made.
    - If 20-percent match is in-kind resources, documentation evidencing that the value of the in-kind resources is equivalent to 20 percent of the contract award. For example, timesheets reflecting hours/hourly wages of staff associated with the project that are not being paid for under the Innovation Challenge contract, or documentation demonstrating value of goods or services being contributed to the project that are not being purchased under the Innovation Challenge contract.
  - Signed letter from Mayor of the lead municipality; or the Director or Chair of the Board of Freeholders of the lead county, expressing support for the application. A lead municipality or a county may only submit one application each, but an application on behalf of a county does not preclude a municipality within that county from submitting their own application.
  - Signed agreement outlining all higher-education or strategic partnerships, including roles, responsibilities and resources contributed from partners.
  - Applicable to Municipal/County Partnerships: Documentation or resolutions demonstrating partnership between municipalities on a municipal partnership application.
  - If applicable, any examples or information reflecting prior experience of the lead municipality, county, or partners in executing planning projects of a similar size and scope.
  - Information relating to organization and/or personnel that will work on the proposed planning, as well as any partners or subcontracted organization or individual(s) that will conduct the proposed planning, including contact names and telephone numbers, evidence of the Applicant's qualifications, and capabilities to perform the services required by this application, resumes or bios for all key personnel who will or who is expected to perform the work outlined in the application. Any information specific to personnel should emphasize relevant qualifications and experience of these individuals in successfully completing contracts of a similar size and scope, relative to the Scope of Work in this application.



## **VIII. Disbursement**

Grant disbursements will only be made to the Lead Municipality/County. The Lead Municipality/County shall be responsible for assuring the compliance of any municipal, county, higher education or strategic partners with all terms and conditions of this application and assumes the sole and absolute responsibility for any payments due to any municipal, county, higher education, or strategic partners.

All Applicants who are successfully awarded Innovation Challenge grants will follow a uniform disbursement schedule. The Lead Municipality/County will receive 50% of the grant amount, upon execution of grant agreement, 25% of the grant amount will be disbursed on or around the halfway point of the grant term upon EDA's receipt and approval of a progress report, and 25 % to be disbursed upon completion and submission of final plan.

At a minimum, the progress report referenced above should include:

- Summary of funds expended to date, and;
- Narrative detailing milestones achieved and overall progress toward completion of final plan.

A monthly call with the Designated Authority Project Manager and the Grantee's assigned Account Manager or Back-Up Account Manager will be held monthly for the first three months of the grant term, up until the halfway point of the grant term where the 25% disbursement is made. During and following that time, additional calls may be held on an as needed basis until the grant term has ended.

No additional funding will be provided for participating in this call or for preparing and submitting the requisite reports. Responding firms should consider the costs associated with these activities when completing Attachment B – Grant Funding Application.

## **IX. Evaluation/Scoring Criteria**

Applications will be evaluated by a cross-organizational Evaluation Committee composed of the Authority's staff, management, and possibly other state agencies and/or industry Subject Matter Experts (SME's) to evaluate, score and rank applications received in response to this Application, and the criteria established herein.

Applications will be evaluated & scored on the criteria listed below (# 1 – 9), based on the information submitted in applications as set forth in Section VII - Technical Proposal.

To be considered for award, an Applicant must achieve or exceed an overall score of fifty ("50") indicating a rating of "Good", on a scale of 10-100 with 100 being the highest rating. The Authority shall be under no obligation to make an award to a firm which does not achieve this minimum scoring threshold.

The point scale below will be assigned as follows for evaluation criteria 1:

- 0 points** – Absence of ability to meet the criteria.
- 1 – 7 points** – Minimal ability to meet the criteria.
- 8-11 points** – Satisfactory ability to meet the criteria.
- 12-17 – points** – Exceptional ability to meet the criteria.
- 18-20 points** - Unique ability to meet the criteria.

Applications will be assigned points against the following criteria:

1. Evidence of the application to demonstrate the plan’s ability to achieve one or more goals of the Innovation Challenge, as outlined in the Scope of Work \*

The point scale below will be assigned as follows for evaluation criteria 2-8:

- 0 points** - Absence of ability to meet the criteria.
- 1-3 points** – Minimal ability to meet the criteria.
- 4-6 points** – Satisfactory ability to meet the criteria.
- 7-9 points** – Exceptional ability to meet the criteria.
- 10 points** - Unique ability to meet the criteria.

Applications will be assigned points against the following criteria:

2. Presence and strength of a defined collaborative stakeholder engagement process and strategy.
3. Strength of established partnership (higher-ed and other strategic, if applicable) within the Application, regarding the reputation, capacity, and proposed level of commitment from the partnering entity(ies); longevity of the partnerships beyond initial project planning stages; benefits and practical advantages of the partnership(s).
4. Commitment of additional funding from higher education partners, strategic partners, or other outside sources.
5. Evidence of the application to demonstrate the plan’s ability to grow number of small businesses/attract employers within the municipality/region.
6. Emphasis on planning for solutions based on the use of new and emerging technologies.
7. Evidence of the application to demonstrate the potential for new jobs within or in support of an innovation industry including emerging technology and life sciences, digital media, clean technology/green energy, fin-tech, cyber-security, AI/AR, transportation-tech, etc.).
8. Evidence of ability to execute a planning project or viability of a planning project.

The point scale below will be assigned as follows for evaluation criteria 9:

- 10 points** for Top 1-5 rank
- 8 points** for 6-10 Rank
- 6 Points** for 11-15 Rank
- 4 Points** for 16-25 Rank
- 2 Points** for 25-50 Rank.

Applications will be assigned points against the following criteria:

9. The Evaluation Committee will rank a lead municipality within the top 50, per the 2017 Municipal Revitalization Index, or a municipal or regional partnership that includes a municipality to be directly impacted by the planning project that is ranked in the top 50 2017 Municipal Revitalization Index.

In the case of multiple municipalities on a single application, an application will receive the requisite number of points based on the ranking of the municipalities within the application, on a cumulative basis, but not to exceed a total of 10 for the category. For example, if an application includes three municipalities ranked between 25-50 on the MRI Index, the application will receive a score of “6” for the criterion. If the application includes two municipalities ranked in the top 1-5 on the MRI Index, the application will receive a score of “10” for the criterion. If a county is involved in an application in a lead role or as a partner, the application receives points based on all municipalities located within that county that are part of the scope of the planning project.

## **X. Questions & Answers**

The Authority will electronically accept written questions and inquiries from all potential Applicant(s) via the web at [InnovationChallenge@njeda.com](mailto:InnovationChallenge@njeda.com). Phone calls/faxes shall not be accepted.

The subject line of the e-mail should state:

“Questions – Innovation Challenge Program”

All Questions received, and Answers given in response to this Application will be answered in the form of a Frequently Asked Questions document to be posted and continually updated on the Authority’s website, <https://www.njeda.com/innovationchallenge>, up until the total program allotment has been exhausted, or 60 days after the publication and release of the application (whichever is sooner). The Authority will also post any addenda on the same website. It is the responsibility of any potential applicant to review the website on a frequent basis to become aware of any answers and addenda.

## **XI. Application Submission**

The Applicant must submit applications electronically, in PDF file format, to be viewable and "read only" by Authority evaluators using Adobe Acrobat Reader software. The electronic

applications must be uploaded to the Authority's ShareFile system via:  
<https://njeda.sharefile.com/r-r8b8b6c4411f4ebd9>.

Applicants should clearly label each electronically uploaded file (Application, Attachment Submittals, etc.) submission. Each uploaded file should be clearly labeled in the following way:

Applicant's name (Municipality/County Submitting Application), and document name (i.e. "Attachment A- Application Information Form").

The electronic application is automatically date/time stamped by the ShareFile software based on time of upload, and that date/time stamp will determine the order in which applications are reviewed.

## **XII. Other Terms and Conditions**

### *Ownership of Material*

All data, technical information, materials gathered, originated, developed, prepared, used or obtained in the performance of the grant agreement, including, but not limited to, all reports, surveys, plans, charts, literature, brochures, mailings, recordings (video and/or audio), pictures, drawings, analyses, graphic representations, software computer programs and accompanying documentation and print-outs, notes and memoranda, written procedures and documents, regardless of the state of completion, which are prepared for or are a result of the activities required under this grant shall be and remain the property of the Authority and shall be delivered to the Authority upon thirty (30) Days' notice by the Authority. With respect to software computer programs and/or source codes developed for the Authority, except those modifications or adaptations made to Applicant or Lead Municipality/County's Background IP as defined below, the work shall be considered "work for hire", i.e., the Authority, not the Lead Municipality/County or subcontractor, shall have full and complete ownership of all software computer programs and/or source codes developed. To the extent that any of such materials may not, by operation of the law, be a work made for hire in accordance with the terms of this grant agreement, Lead Municipality/County or subcontractor hereby assigns to the Authority all right, title and interest in and to any such material, and the Authority shall have the right to obtain and hold in its own name and copyrights, registrations and any other proprietary rights that may be available.

Should the Applicant anticipate bringing pre-existing intellectual property into the project, the intellectual property must be identified in the application. Otherwise, the language in the first paragraph of this section prevails. If the Applicant identifies such intellectual property ("Background IP") in its application, then the Background IP owned by the Applicant on the date of the contract, as well as any modifications or adaptations thereto, remain the property of the Applicant. Upon contract award, the Applicant or Lead Municipality/County shall grant the Authority a nonexclusive, perpetual royalty free license to use any of the Applicant's/Lead Municipality/County's Background IP delivered to the Authority for the purposes contemplated by the contract.

### *News Releases & Advertising*

The Lead Municipality/County is not permitted to issue news releases pertaining to any aspect of the services being provided under this grant agreement without the prior written consent of the Authority. Joint news releases issued by the Lead Municipality/County and the Authority are welcomed and can be coordinated with the Authority's Communications staff.

The Lead Municipality/County shall not use the Authority's name, logos, images, or any data or results arising from this grant agreement as a part of any commercial advertising without first obtaining the prior written consent of the Authority.

### *Applicant Responsibility*

The Applicant assumes sole responsibility for the complete effort required in submitting an application in response to this Application. No special consideration will be given after applications are opened because of an Applicant's failure to be knowledgeable with all the requirements of this Application.

An application that does not achieve the minimum score of 50 required to be considered for a grant award does not preclude the applicant from revising the project parameters and submitting another application for consideration. However, this is a new application and will be considered as such based on the date the new application is received by the Authority

### *Cost Liability*

The Authority assumes no responsibility and bears no liability for costs incurred by an Applicant in the preparation and submittal of an application in response to this Application.

### *Open Public Records Act - Contents of Application*

Applicants should be aware that responses to this Application will be available, upon request, for public inspection. The Authority, as an instrumentality of the State of New Jersey, is subject to the "New Jersey Open Public Records Act" (N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq.), as amended and including all applicable regulations and policies and applicable case law, including the New Jersey Right-to-Know law.

Subsequent to the application submission opening, all information submitted by Applicant in response to an application is considered public information, notwithstanding any disclaimers to the contrary submitted by a bidder, except as may be exempted from public disclosure by OPRA and the common law.

Any proprietary and/or confidential information in your application will be redacted by the Authority. An Applicant may designate specific information as not subject to disclosure pursuant to the exceptions to OPRA found at N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1.1, when the Applicant has a good

faith legal and/or factual basis for such assertion. The Authority reserves the right to make the determination as to what is proprietary or confidential and will advise the Applicant accordingly. The location in the application of any such designation should be clearly stated in a cover letter. The Authority will not honor any attempt by an Applicant to designate its entire application as proprietary, confidential and/or to claim copyright protection for its entire application. In the event of any challenge to the Applicant's assertion of confidentiality with which the Authority does not concur, the Applicant shall be solely responsible for defending its designation.

### *Conflict of Interest*

Applicant must indicate and detail any Conflict of Interest that exists with either their personnel or any personnel belonging to any contractor, vendor, or consultant being utilized by Applicant for the proposed activities. Such conflicts include a direct, familial, or personal monetary interest or any previous or existing personal/professional relationships with the Authority and any personnel assigned to work on the proposed activities.

If such a Conflict of Interest exists with any Applicant personnel or any personnel belonging to any contractor, vendor, or consultant being utilized by Applicant for the proposed activities, Applicant must disclose such possible conflicts in the Application. Should a conflict(s) be found to exist, whether real or perceived, the Authority, in its sole discretion, shall determine whether it is a conflict(s) and the individual(s) involved are to be immediately removed.

### *Application Acceptances and Rejections*

The Authority's staff reserves the right to reject any and all applications, if deemed to be in the best interest of the Authority, to request redefined applications from any entity responding to this Application, to schedule interviews with no Applicants, all Applicants, or only the most highly qualified Applicants, as determined by the Authority; or to request clarifications of any portion of the application received. Further, the Authority's staff reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive minor elements of non-compliance of any entity's application, regarding the requirements outlined in this Application. The Authority retains the discretion to modify, expand or delete any portion of this Application process or terminate this Application process at any time.

## **XIII. Authority's Designated Project Manager's Responsibilities**

The Authority's Designated Project Manager will be responsible for engaging the Grantee, directing the Grantee to perform the work of the contract, approving the deliverables and approving payment vouchers. The Authority's Designated Project Manager is the person that the Grantee will contact after the grant agreement is executed for answers to any questions and concerns about any aspect of the grant and/or grant agreement. The Authority's Designated Project Manager is responsible for coordinating the use of the grant agreement and resolving minor disputes between the Grantee and any component part of the Authority's Designated Project Manager's Department.