NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY (NOFA):

2023 STOCKTON ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM BUILDING GRANT

Submit applications online at the City of Stockton Neighborly portal:

https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/stocktonca/Participant

Deadline for Submission: October 13, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.

Proposals submitted after the deadline and incomplete applications WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

www.StocktonCA.gov/EDD

Call Economic Development for further inquiries (209) 937-8539

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1. Overview

The City of Stockton (City) is soliciting proposals from community-based organizations for services to expand and grow Stockton's entrepreneurial ecosystem. The City has allocated up to $508,000 in funding to the 2023 Stockton Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Grant Program. The funding sources include the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and an allocation of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. This grant program is intended to provide funding toward two identified entrepreneurial ecosystem needs: expanding equitable opportunities and sustainable growth in recovery from the pandemic.

1.1   Federal Funding

The first funding source is ARPA grant funds. The City of Stockton received federal ARPA funding to provide a substantial infusion of resources to help mitigate the impacts of the pandemic, address its economic fallout, and lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery.

In 2021 the City approved $9.85 million of ARPA funds over three fiscal years to support economic recovery and the approved Economic Development Strategic Action Plan.

The second funding source is CDBG funds. City of Stockton receives federal funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) CDBG program to assist low and moderate-income persons, expand economic opportunities, provide decent housing, and/or provide a suitable living environment.

HUD funding is distributed to the City with the expectation that funds will used to fulfill the specific goals, objectives, and priority needs identified in its five-year Consolidated Plan submitted to HUD.

1.2   Program Goals & Objectives

This program provides funding to grow, promote, and celebrate Stockton's unique entrepreneurial spirit and ecosystem by expanding the reach of business services organizations. The goals of this program are guided by the City's 2020-2025 Consolidated Plan and the City's Economic Development Strategic Action Plan (EDSAP). These serve as a strategic roadmap, describing the priority projects to support Stockton's post-pandemic recovery and promote lasting prosperity for all residents.

Priority projects for funding include, but are not limited to, the following areas of focus:

- **One-on-one business consulting and technical assistance** to entrepreneurs, start-ups, and small businesses for business plans, legal services, and growth strategy;
- **Financial consultation and access to capital** to connect eligible entrepreneurs, start-ups, and small businesses to capital financing;
- **Business management services** including diversity equity and inclusion, human resources, insurance requirements, leadership/professional development, recruiting assistance, and personnel.
- **Innovation Assistance** to provide technical assistance and resources to entrepreneurs, start-ups, and small businesses to assist in incorporating strategic technical resources to business (ex. Website development, online POS systems, social media strategy, etc.)
- **Coworking and Incubator Scholarships** opportunities and access to shared workspaces (ex. Scholarships to coworking organizations)
- **Food Incubator Strategies** to provide incubator space, technical assistance, or other resources to support food entrepreneurs.
- **Innovation and Entrepreneur regularly scheduled meetups** to connect entrepreneurs, investors, and industry experts;
- **Startup Weekends** gathering entrepreneurs to kickstart new companies focused on solving stated problems;
- **Pitch Competitions** where startups present their companies and business models for funding promotion;
- **Half-Day or one-day conferences** featuring speakers, break-out sessions, and networking; and
- **Other in-person events** supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Stockton, including seasonal and pop-up markets featuring local small businesses.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Eligibility and Required Information

Organizations that apply for grants to provide business services to entrepreneurs and the business community, must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Must be a business service provider or community-based organization that provides assistance to entrepreneurs, start-up businesses, or small businesses;
- The applicant must have a valid City of Stockton Business License;
- The applicant must operate an office within the Stockton city limits;
- Organizations must provide a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), this is required to receive federal funding;
- Organizations must be able to meet spending deadlines;
- Organization must carry appropriate insurance; and

- Organizations must be able to meet reporting requirements.

2.2 Eligible Use of Funds

All grant funds must be expended on eligible activities that are directly tied to the proposed project.

Applications that propose providing assistance and resources intended to benefit low-to-moderate-income entrepreneurs must meet CDBG guidelines and provide business assistance to program beneficiaries of low and moderate-income (LMI). LMI is defined as individuals with incomes at or below 80% of the area median income for the Stockton area (2023 limits):

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+
80%	$49,100	$56,100	$63,100	$70,100	$75,750	$81,350	$86,950	$92,550

Eligible use of funds include:

- Staff salary for program implementation and planning
- Program related supplies and tools
- Marketing and outreach of services
- Professional services
- Rent (including venue rental) and utility cost directly related to providing services
- Food and beverage related to events (excluding alcohol)

2.3 Ineligible Use of Funds

Grant funds may not be used for:

- Technical assistance, events, or programming with exclusive participation, including restriction of access to programs based on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, medical condition, marital status, or sexual orientation;
- General operating expenses that are not specific to the proposed project;
- Cost incurred or obligated outside of the grant period; and
- Re-granting, contributions to other organizations, and donations.

3. Application Process and Timeline

3.1 Process

The City is soliciting proposals and will identify proposals suitable to the City through a systematic selection review process with select criteria and focus areas for scoring eligible applications. The committee will review only eligible

applications and score them based on content, capacity, feasibility, and other scoring criteria identified within this NOFA. Eligible applicants will be asked to present their proposed project to the selection committee as part of the review process. Funds will be awarded to the applicants best able to meet the NOFA requirements.

3.2   Application Forms

Applications are available online through the Neighborly portal at https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/stocktonca/participant. Applications must be submitted through the Neighborly portal to be considered for funding.

Note that there are two (2) different application forms: 1) Expanding Equitable Entrepreneurial Opportunities and 2) Growing the Stockton Innovation & Entrepreneurial Ecosystem. Be sure to complete the appropriate form.

For programming information or application assistance, or to determine which application is most appropriate for your project, contact the City of Stockton Economic Development Department at (209) 937-8539 or economic.development@stocktonca.gov.

3.3   Deadline

Applicants shall complete and submit one application online for each project/program under the appropriate application funding source via Neighborly. Applications must be received by **5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 13, 2023**. The portal will close promptly at 5:01 p.m. Late applications will not be accepted under any circumstance.

3.4   Timeline

September 7, 2023	NOFA Release Date
September 15, 2023	Virtual Public Information Session
September 25, 2023	Deadline for Emailed Questions
September 29, 2023	Final Response to Written Questions
October 3, 2023	Public Workshop
October 13, 2023	NOFA Due Date & Time
November 2023	Award Recipients Notification & Contracting
May 31, 2024	Projects and Invoicing Completion
June 30, 2024	Final reporting Completion

4. Application Instructions

Submit and complete one (1) application for each activity on the City's Neighborly portal. Applications must be submitted online at: www.portal.neighborlysoftware.com/stocktonca/Participant. Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.

Submit application(s) by Friday, October 13, 2023, before 5:00 p.m.

4.1 Organization Information

Applications may be submitted by agencies, organizations, non-profits, and partnerships. Government agencies are not eligible to apply for funding.

4.2   Project Narrative

Applicants must provide a detailed description of the proposed project or activity in the application. Describe the organization's plan to implement the proposed project or activity. Details about the project or activity deliverables must be measurable relative to the project or activity and the funding request. Applicants should provide information on how the need for the project or activity was determined and explain the needs or service gaps in Stockton that the project or activity addresses. Within the project narrative, applicants must provide the strategy for ensuring LMI clients located in Stockton are the beneficiaries of the project or activity. In addition, describe the clients' type of business (scale, industry, number of employees).

4.3   Required Forms

Program Information

- o Project Budget showing all sources and uses of funds.
- o Program Schedule (includes: inception, marketing, implementation, and reporting milestones).

Organization Information

- o Business License/Use Permit/State License (as applicable)
- o Organizational Staffing Chart
- o Current Certificate of Insurance and Endorsements

Board of Directors

- o Current roster of Board of Directors Roster that includes: Name, Address, Current Position, Current Employer
- o Copy of Board of Directors' authorization to request funding and designation of the authorized official
- o Copy of the organization's conflict of interest policy as adopted by the Board of Directors

Financials

- A letter of statement from the accountant or accounting firm attesting to their due diligence review of the organization's fiscally sound practices and their capacity to complete and sustain the proposed services
- Financial statements for the last three years: 2021 / 2022 / Current
- Organizational and operational budget for the current fiscal year
- 501 ©3 or 501©7 Tax Exemption Letter or Articles of Incorporation

4.4   Evaluation Criteria & Scoring

Applications should present the services each organization proposes to provide to entrepreneurs and small businesses. Applications that meet basic eligibility requirements will be rated using the scoring matrix below:

Organization Scoring Matrix:

1.) **Project Vision & Implementation:** City of Stockton goals and objectives are identified within the proposal. Applicant identifies clear and measurable outcomes and objectives. Completeness and thoroughness of application, the project is adequately described, proposal identifies how it will address the service gaps in Stockton, and explanation of how the project will have a positive impact to the Stockton business community and entrepreneurial ecosystem.	35%
2.) **Agency Capacity to Deliver Project & Financial Management:** Qualification of the organization, overall experience, partnerships, budget management, and experience with past City funding for expenses on a cost reimbursement basis.	25%
3.) **Analysis of Program Readiness:** Feasibility and demonstrated ability to implement projects without delay and in a timely manner. Applicant provided documentation of meeting prior year goals (if applicable). Clearly demonstrates how the organization provides activities for low-moderate income benefit.	20%
4.) **Project Budget:** Projected program budget is clear and realistic; Applicant's experience with leveraging resources, and the submitted project budget is reasonable and aligns with the funding request. Demonstrate and explain the ability to manage budget and expenses of the program or project on a cost reimbursement basis.	20%

4.5   Evaluation Review

City of Stockton staff will conduct an initial eligibility review. Complete applications for organizations in good standing (qualified nonprofit with a City of Stockton business license) will be eligible for second-level review. City staff and local subject matter experts will review and score all responsive applications according to Section 4.4 Evaluation Criteria. Please note that submitting an application does not guarantee funding.

5. Additional Information

5.1 Insurance

Insurance is at Applicant's sole cost and expense and for the full term of the resultant contract or any extension thereof, shall obtain and maintain at least all the insurance requirements listed on the City's website at: City of Stockton Insurance. The nature of the grant requests programming that requires interaction with minors and begs additional coverage not listed on the website but will be provided if awarded during the contracting phase.

It is the Applicant's responsibility to review the insurance requirements. Submission of an application serves as an agreement that the applicant will be eligible for, obtain, and maintain all necessary insurance.

All coverage shall be provided by a carrier authorized to transact business in California and shall be primary. All policies, endorsements, and certificates shall be subject to approval by the Risk Manager of the City to Stockton as to form and content. These requirements are subject to amendment or waiver.

Maintenance of proper insurance coverage is a material element of City contracts, and failure to maintain or renew coverage or to provide evidence of renewal may be treated as a material breach of contract.

The Applicant shall assert that these insurance requirements will be met as part of their proposal response. Failure to comply with these insurance requirements may result in a proposal being deemed unresponsive. The Applicant shall satisfy these insurance requirements concurrently with the signing of the contract prior to the commencement of work. It is strongly suggested that insurance requirements be reviewed with the Applicant's broker to ensure any additional costs are included in the proposal pricing component. See attachments for current insurance requirements.

5.2 Reporting Requirements

All grant recipients are required to execute a grant agreement. Organizations that receive funding are required to submit monthly reports as determined by the City. At the completion of the program, a final report is required for submittal, as

determined by the City. In addition, self-certification forms must be completed by the organization's sub-recipients and/or individuals served (program beneficiaries) and submitted with the required quarterly reports by the provided deadline. The City will provide a template for each of these reporting requirements.

Grant awards will be distributed on a reimbursement basis. Organizations must submit an invoice with supporting documentation to document how funds were spent in order to receive payment. Organizations must show how budget line items provide a direct benefit to the program beneficiaries.

5.3 Supportive Information/ Resources

The following may help your application be more competitive. Please remember submitting an application does **not** guarantee funding. City reserves the right not to fund applications.

Answer all questions completely. Include as much information as possible (such as cost estimates and accomplishments to date).

Submit the application before the deadline.

Davis-Bacon. Please note all federally funded construction projects are subject to Davis Bacon prevailing wage requirements. For further information about Davis Bacon wages call (209) 937-8359. This is for construction projects only.

Leveraging funds. Budgets should reflect all sources of leveraged financial sources of funds. The availability of other resources in the community is foremost in the City's mind when evaluating applications. We suggest applicants be aware of and pursue other larger funding resources, if/when applicable.

Funds must be used by deadline. Given the federal timeline requirements for the use of funds, the City will only recommend funding projects that are ready to begin operations and can demonstrate they can complete the project within in the time span of the grant agreement.

Payments against allocated funds. Funding is administered on a reimbursement basis for Organizations and Entrepreneurs. Any costs incurred before the execution of contractual agreements with the City of Stockton cannot be paid per federal regulations.

Attachments. Remember to include all the required attachments (financial statements/budgets, rosters, tax status, etc.).

Letters. Letters of recommendation or endorsement are not required.

Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). A UEI is required for each organization that receives federal funding. Individual entrepreneurs are not required to obtain a

UEI number. Numbers may be obtained at www.SAM.gov .