

**SMALL BUSINESS RECOVERY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**  
*Notice of Funds Available*

**ADDENDUM 1**

July 30, 2020

TO ALL BIDDERS OF RECORD:

This Addendum consists of 4 page(s). Please acknowledge receipt of this Addendum by entering its number and date on your application/proposal. This Addendum forms a part of the Grant Documents and modifies them as follows:

1. The proposal submission due date is being extended one week, from August 3, 2020 at 1:00 PM to **August 10, 2020 at 1:00 PM**.
  
2. Questions and Answers:
  - What is considered a “small business”?  
*Organizations should use the Small Business Administration’s definition of a small business. The definition varies depending on industry. Visit <https://www.sba.gov/size-standards/> for more information.*
  
  - Will ACCD assist in marketing the program to businesses?  
*Yes.*
  
  - While there are some needs we can anticipate, we expect there are some areas of need that may arise as we begin listening to and working with businesses. If we do not have a vendor lined up to support an, at present, unknown issue, are we able to bring on a “new” vendor to meet the need? What does that process look like -- competitive proposals?  
*Applicants do not need to have every vendor identified at the time of application. However, those with the most clearly defined private sector partners and vendors will be the most competitive. Any vendors and partners should be selected using a competitive search process that guarantees the client gets the best service and the government gets the best value.*
  
  - Along those same lines, we maintain lists of consultants for various topics like marketing, engineering, legal services, business coaching, etc. We have hundreds of potential vendors that businesses have worked with in the past through our existing TA Cost Share Program. We do not anticipate a single vendor within one of these areas will be able to take on the workload all at once. Further, we anticipate some businesses may have existing relationships and already know who they would like to work with. How do we handle that? It seems there is no way we can capture all of the potential vendors within our original application.

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**Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development**

C. Davis Building, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
One National Life Drive  
Montpelier, VT 05620-0501

*Please detail how your network of technical assistance providers has been assembled, what measures are in place to control costs and ensure the best value to the customer, and how your organization vets service providers in your application.*

- Often the type of services required are 3 to 12 month commitments (business coaching, as an example). Can we commit the funds by placing them in an escrow account until the work has been completed?

*No. The work funded by this grant must be completed by December 30, 2020.*

- Are the ACCD funds considered federal or non-federal funds? Can they be used to match federal funds?

*The award will be made using federal dollars from the Coronavirus Relief Fund. Details about this fund can be found at the U.S. Department of the Treasury's website at: <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/cares/state-and-local-governments>. The guidance specifically states that CRF funding may be deemed eligible as non-federal match for Stafford Act funded projects. However, it is the Agency's understanding that for all other federal programs, these funds have federal character. If an applicant wishes to know if these funds are deemed as eligible as non-federal match, the applicant should check with their awarding federal agency.*

- Section 1.1 Background paragraph 2 of the NOFA for the Small Business Recovery Technical Assistance reads: " This NOFA aims to construct a pool of no more than five (5) non-profit partners to provide concierge services that help businesses evaluate and implement best business practices to emerge from the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Agency will use \$2.5 million of federal CARES Act funding to deploy recovery concierge services and a network of public and private sector business to provide technical assistance services across the state." Can you please clarify if private sector businesses are excluded from submitting a response for the grant to provide recovery concierge services?

*The Agency intends to make awards to non-profit organizations. For-profit businesses should work with these non-profit entities to receive subawards or subcontracts.*

- Will the non-profits submitting responses be managing the grant money across both public and private sector businesses?

*Yes.*

- Any clarification at who is eligible for submitting a response to this NOFA would be greatly appreciated.

*Non-profit organizations that provide technical assistance to businesses.*

- We would like to propose, as part of our submission, the inclusion of at least one, and not more than three, Business Cohorts aimed at small woodworking businesses. These would allow 6-8 small businesses in each cohort to receive a combination of group learning and one-on-one coaching on a variety of relevant topics, such as emergency cash flow management, HR and COVID workplace

safety issues, marketing and other issues these businesses are facing. The cohorts would be led by up to two coaches/facilitators each and would meet through the duration of the grant period. I did not see this type of technical assistance listed in the NOFA. Does this model of business assistance meet the objectives you have laid out in the NOFA?

***Yes. This NOFA is broad in its scope to encourage creativity and innovation. However, the highest priority of the NOFA is to provide the most amount of businesses with the most robust technical assistance possible. Narrowly focused applications on a small number of businesses in a single sector are less likely to score well than those that target multiple sectors and engage new technical assistance networks from the private sector.***

- Can you clarify the timing and expectation for project reporting per section 3.4.3.3.; specifically, when will reporting be due to the Agency, and what level of detail is expected in such reporting?

***To comply with Legislative reporting mandates and CRF reporting mandates, awardees will need to file two interim reports and a final report. Interim reports will be due September 28th and December 1st. A final report is due January 31, 2021. The exact reporting requirements will be included in the final grant agreements.***

- Section 2.1 of the NOFA states that the "program should provide businesses with free resources..." Since Section 4.1.6 speaks of "reduced hourly rate of the private sector partners," please confirm that Section 2.1 means free to the business clients and that a portion of the grant dollars are meant to purchase technical assistance services from private sector providers; they are not expected to provide free services.

***Businesses should not need to pay for the technical assistance provided through this program. The Agency hopes that participating private businesses will provide reduced rates to the non-profit applicant, and that technical assistance providers might create a long-term incentive after December 30th for a business to continue working with the provider by offering reduced rates to businesses that participate in the program.***

- Section 3.2 states that "Subrecipients may pass through funds they receive to their own subrecipients only with prior written approval of the pass-through entity." Please confirm that the "subrecipient" in this case is the entity administering the grant (i.e. fiscal agent) and the fiscal agent's subrecipients are the entities that hire the Navigators and contract with a network of service providers to deliver technical assistance, and the "Pass-through entity" is ACCD. If the response to the NOFA explicitly states how the network will be structured and the award is made based on that structure, will the award of the grant (and the execution of the grant agreement) be considered written approval of the Subrecipient structure, negating the need to get written approval from the Agency of each and every subrecipient, which will add considerable administrative steps during a constrained grant period?

***A grantee may provide grants or contracts to subrecipients such as private businesses that provide technical assistance including lawyers, accountants, and marketing professionals. Proposals should include how they will make these subawards. The best proposals will identify the exact subrecipients in the proposal. Any other subawards must be approved in writing by the Agency before they are made. The Agency anticipates making these approvals in the grant agreement.***

- Does the Agency have an expectation or requirement regarding the financial structure of the delivery of technical assistance? Specifically, does the Agency prefer/require that the grant funds be delivered to the business receiving the technical assistance, whereby the business purchases the technical assistance from a service provider of its choice? Or, does the Agency prefer/require that the grant funds be delivered to technical assistance providers recruited by the Navigators to purchase services on behalf of a specific business?

***Funding should be used to provide businesses with services, not grants. The applicant should pay the service provider directly.***

- Under either of the two scenarios discussed in the previous question, is the value of the services provided taxable for the business receiving the services.

***This Agency will work with grantees to determine the answer to this question.***

- Sections 4.2.5 and 4.2.6 require Letters of Commitment and Resumes from “any service providers mentioned in the application.” Yet Section 2.1 states that “Respondents [should] develop plans to hire or contract the needed specialized providers and qualified technical expertise to assist these businesses. Proposals should include a detailed plan to quickly identify and deploy these experts.” Please explain and clarify the apparent inconsistency between Sections 2 and 4 on the matter of the timing of recruiting and getting a commitment from service providers.

***The best applications will have a network of providers identified and committed. If an applicant doesn't have such a network developed, it is acceptable to provide a detailed plan of how the network will be identified and hired.***

- Does our organization that supports the event and wedding industry in Vermont, qualify to respond to the RFP for Small Business Recovery Technical Assistance?

***Any non-profit organization that provides technical assistance to businesses is eligible to apply. However, the highest priority of the NOFA is to provide the most amount of businesses with the most robust technical assistance possible. Narrowly focused applications on a small number of businesses in a single sector are less likely to score well than those that target multiple sectors and engage new technical assistance networks from the private sector.***

- We are very interested in applying and we have done similar projects in other states. However, we are a for-profit private company. The NOFA mentions only non-profits are eligible. I wanted to check in to confirm that is a requirement and for-profit entities are not eligible.

***Only non-profit entities may apply. For-profit entities should partner with a non-profit applicant.***