

January 11, 2023  
Rhode Island Commerce Corporation  
Project Name: Request for Proposals for RI Rebounds-Ventilation Support Program

## **Addendum 2**

### REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

#### **FOR: RI REBOUNDS-VENTILATION SUPPORT PROGRAM**

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation (“Corporation”) seeks proposals from eligible proposers to receive funding under the Ventilation Support Program, a state-wide effort to assist small businesses who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to enhance their ventilation systems, thereby reducing the risk of transmitting COVID-19.

**Prospective Proposers and all concerned are hereby notified of the following questions and answers regarding the Request for Proposals document for the above-described RFP. These questions and answers shall be incorporated in and shall become an integral part of the RFP documents.**

1. Are you expecting proposals to include a list of licensed HVAC contractors a selected intermediary would partner with?

Answer: No, licensed contractors can be retained directly by the small business recipients.

2. If we were approached by a business with a project quote by a licensed contractor, would we be able to award the funds if it is not a contractor the selected intermediary is partnered with?

Answer: Yes, under the program licensed contractors will not have agreements in place with intermediaries (hereinafter “intermediaries” or “selected Proposers”) . Licensed contractors will need to provide documentation of the eligible work to the small business beneficiary who in turn will submit such documentation, along with paid invoices to the applicable intermediary for approval.

3. Would you consider proposals that only service a region of the state?

Answer: All proposals will be considered including those that will only service a region of the state. As this is a competitive process, all details of proposals will be evaluated against each other.

4. How do you propose that the intermediary verifies gross revenues of the business applicants?

Answer: The Corporation anticipates providing application forms to be used by intermediaries. As part of the screening/application process, intermediaries will be required to obtain attestations from small business applicants that their gross revenue did not exceed \$1,000,000 in 2020, 2021, or 2022.

5. To count toward the 20% women and minority ownership goal, are businesses required to be WBE, MBE or DisBE certified?

Answer: As part of the application process, small businesses will be asked if they are a W/MBE and to attest that all information provided in the application is accurate.

6. Does the September 30th end date apply to the awarding of money or to the completion of funded projects?

Answer: The September 30<sup>th</sup> end date applies to the awarding and disbursing of grant funds to small business beneficiaries.

7. Does the business need to own the building where the ventilation upgrades are being done?

Answer: No, small business owners do not need to own the building where ventilation upgrades are being undertaken. .

8. Can the funding be applied to cover part of the cost of a larger HVAC upgrade project?

Answer: Yes. It is anticipated that many HVAC projects will cost significantly more than the \$10,000 limit of this grant.

9. Is there a deadline for purchased items in order to receive reimbursement?

Answer: Items must be purchased and work must be completed on or before September 30, 2023.

10. Can the items be purchased by the entities after the proposer receives the funding?

Answer: Small business beneficiaries may purchase eligible items and seek reimbursement from the intermediary after the Proposer receives funding. Please also see the answer to Question 21.

11. Are municipality purchases available for reimbursement?

Answer: No, only small businesses are eligible for reimbursement. This excludes government owned entities and local governments.

12. Could we obtain a list of all businesses who have received COVID-19 recovery grants and the Technical Assistance Program for long-term capacity building reference in the Eligible Small Businesses and Assistance Amounts section?

Answer: The most up to date list of businesses and organizations who received COVID-19 assistance from the State of Rhode Island can be found here: <http://www.transparency.ri.gov/covid-19/payees.php>.

13. Can the funding be used to support larger projects, for example, upgrading an HVAC system?

Answer: Yes, funds can be used on larger projects that may exceed the \$10,000 award cap of this program. In those cases, grant funds will only cover up to \$10,000 of the cost and the small business is responsible for the remainder.

14. Can funding be used for replacement windows?

Answer: No, funding can be used install additional windows for a small business. Replacing existing windows or upgrading existing windows is not an eligible expense. Adding a window or windows to improve indoor air quality is an eligible expense.

15. Would the work have to be performed by a licensed contractor?

Answer: Any project requesting funds for labor/installation must be completed by a licensed contractor.

16. What is the timing to receive the funds?

Answer: Timing to receive funds will be contingent upon execution of a subaward agreement between the selected Proposer/intermediary and the Corporation.

17. What is the end date for awarding new money or the completion of projects?

Answer: All funds must be disbursed by the intermediary to small business beneficiaries prior to September 30, 2023.

18. Can a small business who needs A/C and other ventilation upgrades apply with just an outline of their needs and the potential cost?

Answer: Applications submitted to an intermediary must include a quote or purchase order (in some cases a screenshot of an online order can be used in the place of a purchase order). With respect to the payment of funds to small business beneficiaries, intermediaries must obtain a receipt or paid invoice from the small business beneficiary prior to reimbursing them for their eligible expenses.

19. Can you please explain how the ISBE % is calculated?

Answer: A full description of how the ISBE % is calculated can be found on pages 6 and 7 of the RI Rebounds Ventilation Program RFP.

20. How much funds can be distributed to intermediaries in advance?

Answer: Contract provisions pertaining to the distribution of funds to intermediaries will be set forth in Subawards following the selection of winning intermediaries. The Corporation anticipates that such Subawards will permit advance payments to intermediaries in an amount up to the lower of 50% of the total amount of the Subaward or \$100,000, which in turn can be used to reimburse small business beneficiaries for eligible expenses already incurred by the small business. It is anticipated that the advance payment provisions in the Subaward will require the delivery of an invoice from the intermediary accompanied by completed applications from eligible small businesses demonstrating eligibility for support to such small businesses in the amount requested. For example, if a selected intermediary receives a Subaward totaling \$100,000 and receives \$100,000 in requests from small business applications, they may receive \$50,000 as an Advance Payment from the Corporation. Once this Advance Payment has been disbursed, the intermediary will be required to provide receipts from small businesses demonstrating eligible usage of funds to the Corporation before additional payments are made.

Up to 50% of approved administrative funds can be advanced to intermediaries upon request.

21. Are we responsible for verification of work? If business sends us an estimate or hard invoice can we use this to disburse funds?

Answer: The intermediary is responsible for verification of work. This can be achieved by obtaining a paid, itemized invoice that describes the items purchased and or the work completed. Funds may only be disbursed as reimbursement for eligible expenses undertaken by the small business. Eligible expenses include:

- Installing a higher-grade filter within an existing air handling unit
- Central HVAC installation, repair, or balancing
- HVAC UVGI system installation
- Adding a portable fan filter unit (PFFU)
- Adding an indoor air purifier

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- Adding a window or windows to a small business
  - Adding a ceiling fan, exhaust fan, or box fan to help distribute air
- Receipt of an indoor airflow and quality assessment

22. If work that qualifies has been completed in the last 18 -24 months can a business request funds?

Answer: Prioritization in this program is given for projects/purchases undertaken after the Ventilation program start date. The program start date is the date of execution of the Subaward Agreement between the Corporation and a selected intermediary. If funds are still available after March 1, 2023, intermediaries may reimburse small businesses for eligible purchases/projects paid for by the small business between March 3, 2021 and September 30, 2023.

**\*\*End of Addendum\*\***