

May 21, 2024

**Rhode Island Commerce Corporation  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

Solicitation Number: **RFP-2337**

ADDENDUM NO. 1

Questions & Answers

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SBAP)-ACCESS TO CAPITAL-  
SMALL-LOANS**

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation (“Corporation”) seeks to retain multiple vendors to provide small business lending and technical assistance services to small businesses in Rhode Island under the Small Business Assistance Program (“SBAP”). The Corporation encourages those responding to the RFP to propose innovative and economically impactful proposals.

**Question #1:** I am reviewing this RFP and do not see a maximum amount I can apply for. Will that be updated, or should I apply for the amount I am confident my organization will be able to deploy in the next 18-24 months?

**Answer #1:** No maximum dollar amount has been set.

**Question #2:** Would you please clarify what the interest rate will be on any funds awarded? In the past, our five other awards have been at 0% interest with no payments due until a balloon at the end of seven years. For programming determination on the rate we will charge, I need to know what rate RI Commerce will be charging the participating lender.

From the RFP: “90% of the award will be structured as a below-market interest rate loan with an initial seven-year term for the applicant to make small business loans.”

**Answer #2:** The loan proceeds shall be advanced to participating lenders on an interest-free basis.

**Question #3:** Do you have the bid docs for this opportunity:  
RFP - Business Lending and Technical Assistance Services

**Answer #3:** The RFP is posted on [www.commerceri.com](https://commerceri.com/about-us/open-government-transparency/) at <https://commerceri.com/about-us/open-government-transparency/>

**Question #4:** Section C) Award Structure and Eligible Uses indicates “90% of the award will be structured as a below-market interest rate loan”. I’m unsure whether that means 90% of the total award will be used by awardees to make below-market rate loans to borrowers (consistent with our current practice) or that any money allocated by CommerceRI will be advanced in the form of a loan for which awardees will be obliged to pay CommerceRI a below-market rate of interest? Or something else?

**Answer #4:** As indicated above in the answer to question #2, loans to participating lenders will be interest free. The expectation is that Borrower Loans – loans to third-party small businesses by the awardees – will be below market, to provide access to funds that would otherwise not be available.

**Question #5:** The deployment of prior SBAP funds required there be at least 50-50 match of funds from another source. RFP 2337 does not mention having that same match funding requirement. Has that been dropped?

**Answer #5:** Interested lenders are encouraged to provide matching funds as it increases the pool of money available to lend.

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