



Frequently Asked Questions Vital Brooklyn Green Job Training Grant

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New York State
Department of Environmental Conservation
Environmental Justice

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Grants Gateway/Prequalification

Q: When I logged into our NY Grants Gateway account and pulled up the grant opportunity, however, there was no "Apply for Grant Opportunity" button.

The grants.gov website lists us as "Document Vault prequalified" and we are registered with grants.gov and signed in. Is there something else that we need to do to be able to access the "Apply" button? Or is this something that we need to address with the Grants Gateway help desk?

A: It sounds like you may be logged in as your Delegated Admin role. Make sure you are logged in as a role with the function to start an application. Please see below. Additionally, you can find New York State Grants Gateway Vendor's Quick Start Guide on How to apply for Opportunities here: https://grantsreform.ny.gov/sites/default/files/grantee_quick_start_guide.pdf

*Note to any applicants experiencing issues regarding applying, opening tabs, and using various functions in the gateway: **Please make sure that when logging in, the role is appropriate for the functions you are trying to perform, as many of them have restricted capability.** In many cases there has been confusion because applicants have been using roles that do not have access to particular functions. Below are some steps to walk you through once you have cleared that path.

Role	Create and Maintain user Roles	Initiate Application	Complete Application	Submit Application	Only view the Application
Delegated Admin	✓				
Grantee		✓	✓		
Grantee Contract Signatory		✓	✓	✓	
Grantee Payment Signatory		✓	✓		
Grantee System Administrator		✓	✓	✓	
Grantee View Only					✓

While logged in the appropriate role follow these steps:

- Click the **View Opportunities** button on the home page underneath the
- **View Available Opportunities** heading.
- Enter search criteria into the search fields to find the opportunity you wish to apply to.
- Click on the Grant Opportunity field of the opportunity you wish to apply to.

Review the information on the page to determine if you wish to apply to this opportunity. If you do wish to apply, click the **Apply for Grant Opportunity** button. You will be taken to the Application Main Page. Click on the **Forms** menu. The first actual question is **Project/Site Addresses**.

Q: Where can I find the Vital Brooklyn Webinar?

A: A recording of the Vital Brooklyn Grant Application Webinar can be found on YouTube at the following address: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ts_MxPUwphQ

Q: We are registered on the NY State Grants Gateway and will be applying for this grant. However, we don't see a link to how to apply THROUGH the NYS Grants Gateway. Could you kindly advise the steps to get to the page on the NYS Grants Gateway where we can complete information and upload items?

A: The short answer is to make sure you are logged in as a role with the function to start an application. Please see below. Additionally, you can find New York State Grants Gateway Vendor's Quick Start Guide on How to apply for Online Opportunities here: https://grantsreform.ny.gov/sites/default/files/grantee_quick_start_guide.pdf

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Q: We are having trouble accessing the on-line application and the ‘Presubmission Uploads’ such as the Work Plan work sheet and the “itemized expenditure budget in the Grants Gateway” Any advice or direction you could provide would be appreciated.

A: The short answer is to make sure you are logged into a role that has the function to start and fill out the application such as the grantee or the grantee system administrator. Please see above question for more details.

Please email the grants gateway helpdesk at grantsgateway@its.ny.gov or call 518 474-5595 for any technical issues.

Q: I am putting together an application for this grant that involves a community organization working with an NFP fiscal sponsor. With the fiscal sponsor submitting the application, do *both* the fiscal sponsor and the community organization need to be registered and pre-qualified in the grants gateway?

A: Only the fiscal sponsor has to register and pre-qualify in the grants gateway.

Q: Our company is acting as a consultant for several non-profit clients with large building portfolios in New York City. If we are applying for the Environmental Justice Grant funding on their behalf, do we have to submit Prequalification requirements (we are for profit), or do our clients have to submit their own Prequalification requirements?

A: According to our guidelines, an eligible applicant must be a not-for-profit corporation (NFP) community-based organization, or a community based organization may partner with an NFP that will serve as their fiscal sponsor. The fiscal sponsor would be responsible for submitting the online grant application in the Grants Gateway and completing the pre-qualification requirements. The fiscal sponsor must also sign a contractual agreement with DEC on behalf of the community group should grant funding be awarded.

Q: Does the fiscal sponsor need to go through the registration process for approval before sending in the application on behalf of the NFP?

A: Yes. The fiscal sponsor must register on the grants gateway and be prequalified on the grants gateway.

Applicant Eligibility

Q: Our nonprofit maintains a wide variety of operations, some of which serve areas that cover multiple boroughs in NYC. As a result, our member list is more expansive than just the Assembly Districts listed in the RFP. However, our job training program specifically draws trainees from the approved list of Assembly Districts, and thus directly benefits those areas. Given this, would we qualify as a "community based organization" for the purposes of this RFP?

A: For the purposes of this grant opportunity, a community based organization is an organization that:

- Serves the residents of an area equal to or smaller than a town or city outside of New York City, or an area equal to or smaller than one of the five boroughs within New York City; and
- Cannot have its charter revoked or otherwise be dissolved through the action of another organization; and
- Is able to enter into legal agreements independent of any affiliated nonprofit organization, government body, university or other entity that would be ineligible to apply for this grant; and
- Has more than 50 percent of its members residing in the affected community, or more than 50 percent of the people served by the applicant community group residing in the affected community.

What that means is that organizations serving areas larger than indicated above are not eligible for this grant opportunity. So if your organization serves all 5 boroughs or is “city wide” that would make you ineligible. However, ineligible not for profits may serve as fiscal sponsors for eligible community based organizations or partner with eligible organizations.

Q: The RFP states that an eligible applicant "Serves the residents of an area equal to or smaller than a town or city outside of New York City, or an area equal to or smaller than one of the five boroughs within New York City."

Will an application for funding be considered eligible if the request for funds is specific to our organization's program offerings at urban farm sites located within a single NYC borough?

A: Thank you for your question. Please refer to pages 4 of the RFA for the full list of eligibility criteria.

For the purposes of this grant opportunity, a community based organization is an organization that:

- Serves the residents of an area equal to or smaller than a town or city outside of New York City, or an area equal to or smaller than one of the five boroughs within New York City; and
- Cannot have its charter revoked or otherwise be dissolved through the action of another organization; and
- Is able to enter into legal agreements independent of any affiliated nonprofit organization, government body, university or other entity that would be ineligible to apply for this grant; and
- Has more than 50 percent of its members residing in the affected community, or more than 50 percent of the people served by the applicant community group residing in the affected community.

What that means is that organizations serving areas larger than indicated above are not eligible for this grant opportunity. So if your organization serves all 5 boroughs or is “city wide” that would make you ineligible. However, ineligible not for profits may serve as fiscal sponsors for eligible community based organizations or partner with eligible organizations.

Q: Our organization has three transitional residences with intensive work training programs to help homeless and formerly incarcerated adults achieve independence and self-sufficiency. We are interested in applying on behalf of one of our Central Brooklyn sites with urban agriculture job training for its 400 residents.

From this description, do we comply with the 2 highlighted points below?

BELOW IS FROM PG 4 of the RFA:

For the purposes of this grant opportunity, a community based organization is an organization that:

- Serves the residents of an area equal to or smaller than a town or city outside of New York City, or an area equal to or smaller than one of the five boroughs within New York City; and**
- Cannot have its charter revoked or otherwise be dissolved through the action of another organization; and**
- Is able to enter into legal agreements independent of any affiliated nonprofit organization, government body, university or other entity that would be ineligible to apply for this grant; and**
- Has more than 50 percent of its members residing in the affected community, or more than 50 percent of the people served by the applicant community group residing in the affected community.**

A: If the individual residence can demonstrate sufficient independence from the larger DOE org (the two points not highlighted) then the site can be the applicant. The residence would also have to demonstrate the highlighted points. If all criteria are true for the residence then the fund could function as a fiscal sponsor.

As for the second highlight, think of members as people served. Some nonprofits have an official membership program so we ask that 50 percent of the members of the applicant organization must reside in the affected community (not staff). Or, for organizations that do not have members, 50 percent of the people served by applicant organization must reside in the affected community.

Q: We are interested in potentially applying for the Vital Brooklyn Green Job Training [RFP](#) (Grant Opportunity ID DEC01-EJVB-2017) and have a question about the eligibility requirements. On page 4 of the RFP, it states “A community based organization is an organization that ... has more than 50 percent of its members residing in the affected

community, or more than 50 percent of the people served by the applicant community group residing in the affected community.”

Can you please clarify what the first part of this requirement means (“has more than 50 percent of its members residing in the affected community”)? Does this mean that at least 50% of staff from an organization have to reside in the affected community? If not, what is meant by “members”?

A: Think of members as people served. Some nonprofits have an official membership program so we ask that 50 percent of the members of the applicant organization must reside in the affected community (not staff). Or, for organizations that do not have members, 50 percent of the people served by applicant organization must reside in the affected community.

Q: Do fiscal sponsors need to meet eligibility requirements?

A: Fiscal sponsors do not have to meet the eligibility requirements however the organization delivering the project must meet all applicant and project eligibility requirements. You can find more about Fiscal Sponsors on page 4 of the RFA.

Q: We are an organization outside of New York State that already does work in Central Brooklyn. What can we do to get us within the parameters to apply?

A: You could partner with a nonprofit community based organization who would meet all the eligibility requirements found on page 4 of the RFA as well as project eligibility requirements found on page 8 & 9 of the RFA.

Projects

Q: Do we need to own the space or can we use municipal space?

A: The project site does not need to be owned by the applicant but if you are using space other than your own permission to use the space should be demonstrated.

Q: What part of Brooklyn does the project need to take part in?

A: Please refer to page 9 of the RFA. Proposals must be for proposed programs located in or directly benefitting one of or a combination of the following Assembly Districts (AD):

AD 42 – Assemblymember Rodneyse Bichotte

AD 43 – Assemblymember Diana C. Richardson

AD 53 – Assemblymember Maritza Davila

AD 54 – Assemblymember EriK M. Dilan

AD 55 – Assemblymember Latrice Walker

AD 56 – Assemblymember Tremaine Wright

AD 57 – Assemblymember Walter T. Mosley

AD 58 – Assemblymember N. Nick Perry

AD 60 – Assemblymember Charles Barron

Budget

Q: Are internship stipends an allowable expense for the Vital Brooklyn Green Jobs Training RFA? For example, high school students participate in internships related to green jobs and are paid a stipend for their time in the internship.

If yes, what is the maximum percentage of the requested budget which is allowed for stipends?

A: Yes, internship stipends are an allowable expense for the Vital Brooklyn Green Job Training grant opportunity. The only requirement is that paid staff, including fringe benefits, to any individual person cannot exceed 30 percent of the total grant award.

Q: How do you fill out the salary portion of the budget?

A: Here is a great 16 minute video that explains how to fill out the budget including how to complete salary calculations. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0b1btPFdHMu>

Q: Would you let me know who I should contact with a specific budget question about the Community Impact grant?

A: Please contact justice@dec.ny.gov and our grants administrator will send a prompt response to your question.

Project Timeframes

Q: When can we start to offer programs from this funding?

A: The activity for the request must fall within the dates of January 17, 2019 to January 16, 2021.

Q: Can you please tell me the time frame for these EJ Grants, one- year; two-year; open ended? Please excuse me if this information is in the RFA and I missed it.

A: The grants are paid in installments up to a two-year (24-month) period. Your proposal may be for a project undertaken in less than two years.

Q: How long is the contract for Grant Opportunity DEC01-EJVB-2017? I see on Grants Gateway that the anticipated contract is 2 years, but I can't find any details in the Grant Opportunity PDF.

A: Contracts will be for a two-year period although your project may be completed in less time.

Q: What would be the anticipated start date of projects?

A: The anticipated start date is January 17, 2019.

How often will you update the Q & A?

Q: It would be very helpful to see the questions that are being asked for the grant, and know just how to prepare answers. Is there any way to see the questions and documents needed, while we are awaiting access to the Grants Gateway?

A: All applications must be completed on the grants gateway. The RFA contains more information. There is also an FAQ up that is being updated weekly.

Q: When/where will answers to other questions be posted on the website?

A: The Q and A for this grant opportunity will be posted on the Grant Opportunity Portal (the Grants Gateway) and are updated weekly.

Application Questions

Q: What is the application page limit, if any?

A: The application is through the Grants Gateway. You will see the character limits in the Gateway for each question which range anywhere from 500 characters to 2500 characters depending on the question. Some of the questions allow document uploads so you would be able to expand on some of your responses and provide additional information if the question allows for an upload

Q: Can you provide a link to the specific document that states the NYC REDC priorities? The website referred to in the RFA (regionalcouncils.ny.gov) contains many related resources from which one could intuit the strategy, however I was not able to find the priorities document itself, nor a clear statement of the priorities within the related resources.

A: The NYS REDC Priorities in the "2018 REDC Guidebook" which is on the landing page of the website. Here is a link to the Guidebook <http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2018-04/2018REDCGuidebook.pdf>

Q: We are in process of applying for the Vital Brooklyn Green Job Training Grant, due on July 20. Can you point us toward the most recent strategies for the regional economic plan?

A: <https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/>

What to expect if we are given an award/Reporting Requirements

Q: Must the project start as soon as the MCG is executed? For example, our proposed project would begin in spring 2019 (and end prior to January 2021).

A: Please see page 9 of the RFA for Proposed Project Timeframes the activity for the request must fall within the January 17, 2019 to January 16, 2021 timeframe. The project does not need to start as soon as the MCG is executed but the project should be able to be completed during that timeframe.

Q: What kind of reporting requirements will be necessary if we are given an award?

A: Please refer to pages 18-19 of the RFA. If you are awarded a grant you will be expected to submit quarterly narrative and expenditure reports (ie. 3/30, 6/30, 9/30, 12/30 for each year of the grant). At the end of the grant period you'll be expected to submit a final report no later than 60 days after the end of the contract term or upon completion of the project.

Other Questions

Q: With this being such a large initiative, do you see any marketing or communications opportunities arising for a for-profit firm?

A: No, not through this grant opportunity.