



**STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**

**New Jersey DOC: Locally, Empowered, Accountable, and Determined (LEAD)
Reentry Initiative**

**Category C:
INNOVATIVE REENTRY ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT
NOTICE OF GRANT OPPORTUNITY**

- **Announcement Date:** Monday, November 20, 2023
- **Application Due Date:** Wednesday, January 17, 2024 (noon)

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Commissioner**

INNOVATIVE REENTRY ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT

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INNOVATIVE REENTRY ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT

Take Notice that in compliance with N.J.S.A. 52:14-34.4 et seq. (P.L. 1987, c.7), the Department of Corrections hereby publishes a notice of the availability of the following grant:

A. Information for Bidders (Background)

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, in 2021, the US criminal justice system held almost 1.2 million people in state prisons.¹ A recent analysis of the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) inmate census revealed that NJDOC currently houses approximately 12,000 inmates.² About (59%) percent of all state correctional institution offenders were Black³. Further analysis revealed that six counties alone, Essex, Camden, Passaic, Atlantic, Middlesex, and Union, comprise more than half (53%) of total NJDOC commitments. Additional counties with large municipalities defined as urban communities and a significant number of incarcerated citizens include Hudson 6% and Mercer 5%.⁴ However, many citizens fail to realize that incarceration is not a permanent circumstance for most imprisoned persons. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, at least 95% of all State prisoners will be released at some point, with approximately 80% being released to parole supervision.⁵

Finding steady and gainful employment after release from prison can be difficult. A lack of support and career training can contribute to unsuccessful community reintegration. Organizations working with people returning to the community must provide unlimited opportunities to achieve economic independence and self-sufficiency by leveraging entrepreneurship development as a path to success. To achieve success, the NJDOC seeks to establish community partners that can provide a broad spectrum of entrepreneurial development to empower returning citizens to continue the path of prosocial and law-abiding behavior, which will aid the NJDOC in leading the nation in combating recidivism.

The NJDOC does not embrace a one-size-fits-all solution to reentry service provision. To that end, the NJDOC recognizes that reintegration is most successful when communities and corrections come together to share a collective goal, honor the mutual interest of methodologies

¹ https://bjs.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh236/files/media/document/p21st_sumB.pdf

² https://www.nj.gov/corrections/pdf/offender_statistics/2023/Total_2023.pdf

³ https://www.state.nj.us/corrections/pdf/offender_statistics/2023/By%20Race_Ethnicity%202023.pdf

⁴ https://www.state.nj.us/corrections/pdf/offender_statistics/2023/By%20County%20of%20Commitment%202023.pdf

⁵ BJA <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/reentry.pdf>

for addressing public safety, affirming the bond between them, and acknowledging and supporting urban communities' ability to succeed when given fair access to resources. The goal is a cooperative partnership for successful reentry service delivery. Our mission is service delivery at the local level, empowered by communities that develop necessary resources, a willingness to hold community-based agencies accountable for advertised services, and forward-thinking strategies for determining service integration models.

To achieve this goal, the NJDOC created the NJLEAD initiative. NJLEAD stands for Locally Empowered, Accountable, and Determined. NJLEAD aims to establish a coordinated and collaborative effort to ensure a continuum of care and treatment from prison to community. An effective reintegration process is collaborative and most successful when returning citizens understand their right to self-determination and are empowered to choose service providers who offer resources that meet their unique needs. As a result, urban communities with a consortium consisting of a broad spectrum of diverse service providers experienced working with those once involved in the carceral system provide an opportunity for successful reentry.

Designated municipal government entities, nonprofit community-based corporations, or associations will work in concert with the NJDOC, Division of Programs and Reintegration Services, the newly developed Office of Community Engagement and Reentry Initiatives (CERI), the Office of Educational Services (OES), the Office of Programming and Supportive Services (OPSS), and the Office of Community Programs (OCP). The goal is to ensure that the rehabilitative work, academic, and vocational training implemented inside the correctional facility continues and expands immediately upon release to reduce the likelihood of high recidivism rates presently seen among the national statistics.

The NJDOC has received state funding through the Office of the Governor to support NJLEAD's innovative reentry career and entrepreneurial initiatives in urban communities and communities impacted by high incarceration rates in New Jersey. This funding is designed to promote various evidence-informed and effective reentry initiatives for those returning from prison. It also provides urban communities with the necessary resources to support and enhance the State of New Jersey and its ongoing success in reducing recidivism.

B. Important Dates

- NGO release date: Monday, November 20, 2023
- End of question period: Thursday, November 30, 2023
- All questions and answers posted on the NJDOC Website: Friday, December 1, 2023
- Proposal closing date: Wednesday, January 17, 2024 (noon)
- Notification submitted to the Office of Community Affairs of sub-grant award: Friday, March 1, 2024.

C. Eligible Organizations

Nonprofit community-based organizations or associations and municipal or state government entities with proven experience working with individuals who have experienced incarceration are eligible to apply. Nonprofit community-based organizations or associations, municipal or state government entities currently operating local employment or entrepreneurial programs and services, or developing reentry initiatives on employment and entrepreneurship will be considered for funding. The final amount determination will be based on selection criteria.

D. Scope of Work

The NJDOC seeks proposals specifying how municipal, county, or state entities, nonprofit community-based organizations, or associations will use funds to implement innovative entrepreneurial development that will increase and improve the ability of incarcerated persons within 364 days of release or the formerly incarcerated to achieve economic stability and independence. This service area may include but is not limited to municipal government entities, nonprofit community-based organizations, or associations using funds to support strategies and programs designed to improve the employability of individuals returning to the community. Strategies such as improving entrepreneurial development, including work from home ventures, digital and financial literacy training, financial investing, debt management and debt-free living, and other creative, innovative entrepreneurial and financial management opportunities will be considered.

Proposals may include civil legal assistance to address legal barriers to entrepreneurship, such as driver's license restoration, commercial driver's licenses (CDLs), expungement of criminal records, and barriers created by occupational licensing boards that prevent a formerly

incarcerated person from becoming gainfully employed in an area in which they are trained and proficient. Additionally, proposals may include assistance in starting a business, such as reasonable assistance with appropriate interview attire and grooming, business cards, formal business coaching, financial planning, and post-interview/meeting follow-up. Proposals must explain how the organization will assist participants with the online submission of business proposals, virtual interviewing, and post-release support for launching a new business.

Grantees will partner with NJDOC's Providing Access to Community Employment (PACE) Unit to share information regarding the availability of training and employment opportunities in the community and to arrange prerelease, post-release business administration, and leadership training. Proposals need to meet the required standards to receive funding from the NJDOC.

The NJLEAD-funded project staff must have direct access to the agency Director/CEO and attend all NJDOC monthly meetings and reentry events at the NJDOC correctional facilities and the residential community reintegration programs (RCRPs). The NJLEAD-funded project staff must also document all contacts with and services provided to participants and their families and submit them in the NJLEAD required monthly reporting format by the specified due dates.

Proposals are limited exclusively to Innovative Reentry Employment and Entrepreneurial Initiatives that provide prerelease and post-release assistance, employment, and entrepreneurial-related expenses. Proposals **shall not** be directed towards:

- Staff training and conferences
- Staff tuition reimbursement or educational incentives
- Staff incentives
- Medical care or inpatient substance use treatment
- Testing for participant substance abuse
- Monitoring or surveillance
- Other services unrelated to the scope of the grant application

Proposals should be for services that support a seamless transition and reintegration from prison to the community, strengthening and improving each participant's ability for economic security and independence. All service providers must utilize trauma-informed, holistic, and culturally sensitive approaches to reentry services. The Reentry Employment and Entrepreneurial Specialist(s) must have direct access to the agency CEO/Director and are

required to attend all NJDOC monthly meetings and reentry events at the NJDOC correctional facilities and central office headquarters.

Proposals should address the organization's approach to reentry services, its unique programming approach, and gaps in services that must be addressed. See section F, Application Format, for proposal requirements.

Priority Service Eligibility:

- a. Adult individuals within 180 days of release from NJDOC or released from a NJ State prison within seven (7) years and their immediate families.
- b. Adult individuals within 90 days from release from an NJ county jail or released from a NJ county jail within the last three (3) years and their immediate family.
- c. Adult individuals under NJ State Parole supervision are eligible for supportive services under this initiative, providing they meet eligibility categories A or B.
- d. Individuals on probation are **ineligible** for supportive services under this initiative.
- e. Residents of NJ returning to the state after having served time in other jurisdictions may be eligible for services on a case-by-case basis. The grantee must consult with the NJLEAD office.

E. Availability of Funds

Funds will be made available after the review and approval of proposals. Multiple awards are available based on selection criteria. Only one award will be given per applicant.

Total funding amount available: \$1,000,000.00

Total number of awards: 4-10

Minimum award available: \$50,000

Maximum award available: \$250,000

Period of Performance: March 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025

Planning Period: March 1, 2024, to March 31, 2024

Implementation Period: April 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025

Applicants must provide a budget and narrative specifying the NJLEAD program's requested award amount. Funding cannot be utilized to supplant any existing services and positions.

Funding **shall not** be used for the following:

- Prizes/entertainment/trinkets
- Gift Cards
- Purchasing vehicles
- Food and beverages
- Other services not approved in advance by the NJDOC

Successful applicants will be awarded a 16-month grant with an initial startup planning period of 30 days. All services must commence by April 1, 2024. The NJDOC has the sole discretion to award a one-year grant extension based on performance and funding availability.

F. Application Format

The applications shall be double-spaced, using a standard 12-point font (Times New Roman is preferred) with not less than 1-inch margins, and shall not exceed twelve pages, excluding the cover page, budget, and two letters of support. Pages shall be numbered "1 of 12," "2 of 12," etc.

The application shall describe the general approach to accomplishing the tasks outlined in the scope of work. ***Applications shall be formatted in the following five sections in the order given. The following information shall be included in your proposal:***

Section I. APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

- Name of the organization, address of the agency/corporation, the agency's Data Universal Numbering System (D-U-N-S) number, and category applying for and amount (**COVER PAGE**)
- Introduction about the organization, including experience working with people who are currently or formerly justice involved.
- Organizational commitment to diversity and inclusivity, ability to deliver culturally competent and sensitive services and gender-responsive approach.
- Demonstrated need for the development of reentry services in the local community.

- Current reentry employment and entrepreneurial programs managed by the entity, nonprofit community-based corporation, or association, including client demographics and services that will be expanded and enhanced under this initiative.
- Disclosure of contracts with the State of New Jersey and County government agencies and private and federally funded reentry, rehabilitative, and social services programs.
- Include a description of the corporation or association governance structure, including the table of organization and Board of Directors and the organization's administrative, management, and organizational capacity to enter a grant with the NJDOC. Indicate the total number of employees.
- State the reporting structure for the Innovative Reentry Career and Entrepreneurial Initiative.

Section II. PROGRAM APPROACH

- Program design and types of programs and services
- Total number of returning citizens to be served
- Describe the planned organizational structure of the initiative, including the management of the project and plan for supervision of staff
- Agreements with businesses within your network experienced in hiring the formerly incarcerated or those who have expressed an interest.
- Plan(s) for assisting participants with entrepreneurial ventures and career employment
- Discuss existing or proposed partnerships with educational, vocational, or employment training organizations.
- Plans for assisting participants with post-release follow-up entrepreneurial education
- Discuss the criteria for transitioning participants upon successful program completion.
- Include any anticipated difficulties with the tasks as described by this NGO.
- Describe the method for outcome data management. Methodology for collection and analysis of outcome data

Section III. Reporting

The subgrant agency shall submit multiple reports to the NJDOC to ensure accurate reporting of performance measures. The application shall describe the proposed plan for collecting, maintaining, and reporting the following information:

- One programmatic narrative report explaining the use of funds
- All fiscal reporting related to reentry expenditures

Section IV. Budget and Budget Narrative

The project budget must include all anticipated expenditures on participant-related reintegration services. Indirect costs shall not be more than 10% of the proposed budget.

If the budget includes planned consultant/contracted services, please explain the consultants' existing relationship with the applicant.

The budget **shall not** include the following costs:

- Mortgage costs
- Building Improvements
- Fringe benefits for part-time staff

Section V. Miscellaneous

Applicants must include two (2) letters of support from key community stakeholders.

(excluding state correctional partners) detailing the organization's character, ability, and commitment to work with the applicant to promote the initiative's mission.

Applicants who are already an NJSTART vendor must provide copies of the NJSTART vendor number, NJ Business Registration, and NJ Affirmative Action Certificate in the application.

If awarded, Applicants shall be required to register and become NJSTART vendors. If an applicant is a current NJSTART vendor, they must update their profile to accept Automated Clearing House (ACH) payments.

All grantees and sub-contractors must agree to participate in the NJDOC grant database platform to submit all required grant fiscal documents. Grantees must identify their

electronic accounting system. Grantees may include the cost of the electronic accounting system as an indirect cost in the application. The budget narrative must tell the story for the requested budget line items.

Applicants must identify the person responsible for the project fiscal reporting, describe their accounting expertise qualifications, and include their resume. All salaries requested in the budget must be proportionate to the time spent working directly on the NJLEAD-funded project and commensurate with the employee’s experience and credentials.

G. Selection Criteria

Selection criteria will be based upon the following and in this order of importance:

- Demonstration of Need..... 20%
- Program service design 20%
- Business networks for hiring..... 15%
- Experience with developing entrepreneurial ventures..... 15%
- Experience working with returning citizens 10%
- Projected innovative reentry initiative expenditures..... 10%
- Method for collection and analysis of outcome data10%

Current NJLEAD-funded partners will receive priority consideration based on their **exceptional programmatic and fiscal standing** with NJDOC. These partners who have demonstrated their capabilities and competencies in implementing their projects will receive an additional 15 points to their overall score.

H. Audit Requirements

The audit of the agency must be in accordance with the applicable regulations (and their subsequent revisions) as follows:

- 1) Federal OMB Circular A-133 Revised, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Nonprofit Organizations.
- 2) U.S. Government Accountability Office, Government Auditing Standards.

At any time during the grant term, the grant agency's overall operations, its compliance with specific grant provisions, and the operations of any subcontractors engaged by the subgrant agency may be subject to audit by the NJDOC.

Whether or not such audits are conducted during the subgrant term, a final financial and compliance audit of subgrant operations, including the relevant operations of any subcontractors, may be performed after subgrant termination or expiration. A subgrant agency is subject to audit up to five years after the termination or expiration of a subgrant. If any audit has been started but not completed or resolved before the end of the five years, a subgrant agency continues to be subject to audit until it is completed and resolved.

The subgrant agency shall agree to ensure the timely and appropriate resolution of audit findings and recommendations.

I. Subgrant Award and Term

The subgrant shall be awarded with reasonable promptness by written notice to that responsible applicant whose proposal meets the above specifications and is most advantageous to the State, price, and other factors considered. NJDOC staff may request a site visit to the applicant agency before awarding the subgrant.

Agency partnerships are permissible. However, only one agency may be the primary applicant and receive grant funding. The other agency would be a sub-contractor to the lead applicant. Sub-contractor agencies must provide fiscal documents and formalize all programming services. An NJLEAD-funded agency shall not outsource or subcontract with another NJLEAD agency or non-NJLEAD agency to provide the required services for which they have applied.

Upon notification of the grant award, municipalities must obtain the necessary local government resolutions required to accept the award within 90 days of notification of being selected. Award distributions shall be quarterly and based on grant compliance.

J. Instructions for Submitting Questions

Questions regarding this NGO cannot be accepted via telephone. Questions must be emailed before the end of the question period to GMUNJLEAD@doc.nj.gov. All questions and answers will be posted on the NJDOC Website.

K. Mandatory Documents

The mandatory documents that must be submitted in response to the NGO include the following:

- 1) Reentry Entrepreneurial Development – Title Page (Appendix)
- 2) Compliance Checklist
- 3) Proposal
 - a) Applicant organization
 - b) Program approach
 - c) Reporting
 - d) Budget and budget narrative
 - e) NJSTART vendor number, NJ Business Registration, and NJ Affirmative Action Certificate, if applicable.
 - f) Resume of fiscal agent
 - g) Fiscal audit documents: Proof of 501c3 status, Certificate of Incorporation, Most recent tax returns, Certified Audit Report

L. Instructions for Submitting Applications and Submission Deadline

The NGO will be posted on NJDOC's Web site at:

<http://www.state.nj.us/corrections/pages/Grants.html>.

The responsibility for a timely submission rests with the applicant. NJDOC must receive one completed application with all attachments by **noon on Wednesday, January 17, 2024**, without exception. NJDOC will not accept and cannot evaluate an application received after this deadline for funding consideration.

The application must be delivered via email

To: GMUNJLEAD@doc.nj.gov

The email submission subject line must indicate the “name of the agency-NJLEAD Category C Application.” The documents shall be in PDF format and sent in one email with two attachments: 1) the NJDOC required title page, 12-page proposal, and budget, and 2) all other supportive documents.

M. Panel Review and Award Process

The NJDOC will conduct an internal review of each grant application. A review panel will evaluate the applications in accordance with the selection criteria. The successful applicants will be notified of the subgrant award on or around **Friday, March 1, 2024**. Successful applicants must comply with the State of NJ Department of Treasury business form requirements before awarding grant funds.

Notice of Grant Opportunity

INNOVATIVE REENTRY ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT

NJLEAD CATEGORY C

Appendix

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
INNOVATIVE REENTRY ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Innovative Reentry Entrepreneurial Development Title Page		
<u>SECTION I:</u>		
TITLE OF NGO:	INNOVATIVE REENTRY ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT (CATEGORY C)	
OFFICE:	Office of Compliance and Strategic Planning	
Unit:	Grants Management Unit	
<u>SECTION II:</u>		
CONTACT NAME:		
APPLICANT AGENCY:		
ADDRESS:		
CITY:	STATE:	ZIP:
PREVIOUS FUNDING: Agency received funding from the NJ Department of Corrections within the last two years of submission of this application. YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		
PROJECT DIRECTOR:		
TELEPHONE NUMBER:	E-MAIL:	
FISCAL MANAGER:		
TELEPHONE NUMBER:	E-MAIL:	
TOTAL AMOUNT OF FUNDS REQUESTED: \$ _____		
APPLICATION CERTIFICATION: <i>To the best of my knowledge and belief, the information contained in the application is true and correct. The governing body of this agency has duly authorized the document, and we will comply with the attached assurances if funding is awarded.</i>		
SIGNATURE OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER	City	date
(Please print the name of the CEO)	email address	mobile #
<u>*FAILURE TO INCLUDE A REQUIRED APPLICATION COMPONENT CONSTITUTES A VIOLATION AND WILL RESULT IN THE APPLICATION BEING ELIMINATED FROM CONSIDERATION.</u>		
<u>SECTION III:</u>		
SEND PROPOSALS TO: <u>GMUNJLEAD@doc.nj.gov</u>		APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY: Noon on January 17, 2024
<u>NO FACSIMILE SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED.</u>		