



Small Business & Microenterprise Technical Assistance Program Summary & Guidelines

The City of Minneapolis currently supports technical assistance to businesses and entrepreneurs through various programs and contracts administered by the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development. This technical assistance includes everything from business planning to legal and tax advice to financial analysis. In order to obtain the highest level of outcomes and accountability, CPED staff is recommending the development of a Technical Assistance program.

CPED intends to issue a Request for Proposals in March 2012 and enter into up to five outcome-based contracts that will allow the City to track valuable information and ensure that City dollars are used for their intended purpose.

Objective

The goal of the Technical Assistance Program is to help Minneapolis-based businesses successfully start or expand and to support job creation in the City. The assistance provided through this program is intended to facilitate economic development through the establishment, stabilization, and expansion of small businesses and microenterprises.

Program Funding

It is proposed that the Technical Assistance Program will be launched with a total pool of up to \$500,000. Up to \$300,000 will be made available by redirecting funds currently allocated to other programs including the Great Streets Business District Support Program. Additionally, up to \$200,000 of CDBG funds will be used to target microenterprises owned or established by low and moderate income individuals.

Eligible activities

Activities are eligible if they support the economic vitality of local small businesses and microenterprises through technical assistance, which may include, but is not limited to: business planning, educational classes or one-on-one sessions on legal, regulatory, and tax issues, financial record keeping, marketing and merchandizing, financial management, and business operations.

Eligible organizations

Eligible organizations include non-profit community development organizations that have demonstrated capacity to perform the work. This includes staff devoted to business development, establishment, and expansion activities, past organizational and staff experience providing assistance to businesses, and managing contracts.

Eligible areas

The program is available throughout the City of Minneapolis.

Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria: leverage of other funds, impact and viability, capacity, feasibility and readiness, and how the organization will measure impact.

An evaluation panel consisting of CPED staff and partner organizations will review proposals and present a recommendation to City Council for final approval.

Proposed Timeline

February 28, 2012	Program concept considered by Community Development Committee
March 12, 2012	Issue Request for Proposals
March 26, 2012	Pre-proposal meeting for prospective proposers
April 23, 2012	Proposal evaluation
May 15, 2012	Present staff recommendation to Community Development Committee
June 2012	Execute contracts with service providers