

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of Commission on Science, Innovation, and Technology

FROM: Judith Sheft,
Executive Director, Commission on Science, Innovation, and Technology

DATE: January 26, 2024

RE: Approval of Maternal and Infant Health Pilot Seed Grant Program Round 2

Request:

The Members of the Commission on Science, Innovation, and Technology (CSIT) are requested to approve:

- i. The launch of Maternal and Infant Health Pilot Seed Grant Program Round 2, the continuation of a competitive pilot grant program supporting innovative technological solutions to maternal and infant health challenges.
- ii. Funding of \$1,550,000 to support this program to be allocated from CSIT's FY2024 budget.

Background:

As part of New Jersey First Lady Tammy Murphy's Nurture NJ initiative, which aims to make New Jersey the safest place to deliver a baby in America, the NJ Commission on Science Innovation and Technology and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (EDA) is proposing to launch Round 2 of the Maternal and Infant Health R&D Grant Program.

The 2021 Nurture NJ Strategic Plan is particularly focused on ending the unacceptable racial disparities for maternal and infant mortality in New Jersey. It is a comprehensive, whole-of-government effort by the Murphy Administration, led by the Office of the First Lady and comprised of more than 20 agency partners. Launched in 2019 by Governor Phil Murphy and First Lady Tammy Murphy, Nurture NJ is a statewide awareness campaign committed to both reducing maternal and infant mortality and morbidity and also ensuring equitable care among women and children of all races and ethnicities. The initiative is focused on improving collaboration and programming between all departments, agencies, and stakeholders to achieve the goal of making New Jersey the safest and most equitable place in the nation to give birth and raise a baby.

In support of this effort, on May 10, 2022, The Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology in partnership with the NJEDA launched the Maternal and Infant Health Grant Program, Round 1. The goal of the Maternal and Infant Health R&D Grant Program is to support innovation from researchers and entrepreneurs focused on developing technology, therapeutics, and other solutions to address maternal and infant health challenges in New Jersey. The grant

engages early-stage innovation-based companies in NJ accelerate research and development of technologies to transform new discoveries from research stage into commercially viable products and services. The grant funds support the R&D development of technologies, products and services that enhances the quality of care and service delivery activities to women, infants, and healthcare agencies. The program focuses on outcomes that increase positive health outcomes throughout the Continuity of Care Stage: Prenatal through Postpartum.

On January 2022, The CSIT Board approved seventeen grants for a total of \$1,275,000 in funding to seventeen New Jersey-based companies.

Due to the success of the program, staff recommends authorization of a new round of this pilot with slightly higher funding level. In addition, we propose the following changes to the program:

Summary of Maternal and Infant Health Pilot Seed Grant Program Round 2

The goal of Maternal and Infant Health Pilot Seed Grant Program Round 2 will remain the same as Round 1. The program aims to provide approximately 20 grant awards for companies developing technology, therapeutics, and other solutions to address maternal and infant health challenges in New Jersey.

The eligible target areas that the grant will support will also remain the same as Round 1:

- Life Sciences – (e.g., therapeutic drug development, medical device)
- Technology (e.g., digital and telehealth services and platform development, mental health services)
- Food and beverage (non-retail)

The Maternal and Infant Health Pilot Seed Grant Program Round 2 has a total budget of \$1,550,000 for grant awards. Eligible applicants will receive awards of up to \$75,000. The total grant budget will be coming from CSIT FY24 budget. The program will be implemented by CSIT.

The objectives of the program are to:

- i. support innovation from researchers and entrepreneurs focused on developing technology, therapeutics, and other solutions to address maternal and infant health challenges from prenatal to 12 months postpartum; and
- ii. engage early-stage innovation-based companies in NJ to accelerate research and development of technologies to transform new discoveries from research stage into commercially viable products and services that impact maternal and infant health

All applicants for the Maternal and Infant Health Pilot Seed Grant Program Round 2 must have achieved a demonstration of concept for their project proposed for funding. The demonstration evidence will include at least one of the following:

- Description of the proof-of-concept results
- Published paper outlining results achieved
- Detailed description of patent application for proposed technology
- Successful completion of a federal SBIR/STTR grant or contract related to the project

- Confirmation documentation from a university tech transfer office if the project relates to technology that has been developed at a university

Program Eligibility

All applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria at the time of submission and throughout the application review period:

- Authorized and in good standing to conduct business in New Jersey
- Have a current New Jersey tax clearance certificate.
- Have no more than 50 full-time equivalent workers (FTE calculated on a 35-hour work week) at time of application.
- Have a minimum of one (1) full-time worker (35-hours work week). A founder can be counted as a worker; a worker may be paid or unpaid.
- 50% or more of the cumulative hours worked by all workers, founders, and contractors must be conducted in NJ (calculated on an FTE basis – 35 hrs. per week).
- Have less than or equal to five million dollars (\$5,000,000) in prior calendar year sales revenue.

The grant funding can be utilized to maintain project activities and cover general operating costs

The following expense categories are ineligible for funding from the Program:

- Direct counseling and clinical services
- Manufacturing of products for sale or commercial use
- Real estate rental expenses
- Patient clinical trial expenses
- Construction Costs

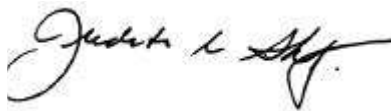
Applicants that meet the above eligibility criteria will then be evaluated by a team of subject matter experts (SMEs) who will review each application. The SME review, once complete, will be incorporated into scoring by CSIT. Scoring will be based on innovation, implementation plan, community engagement and impact, market strategy, and project team members. Bonus scoring will be awarded to applicants that are using technology initially developed at a NJ university; are NJ-certified women-owned, minority-owned, or veteran-owned businesses; or have a primary place of business/R&D located either within an opportunity zone eligible census tract or within a government restricted municipality (Trenton, Paterson, or Atlantic City). Grants will be awarded to applicants with the highest overall scores, provided a minimum score is met.

Request:

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- ii. Funding of \$1,550,000 to support this program to be allocated from CSIT's FY2024 budget.



Judith Sheft
Executive Director

Attachments

- i. The Maternal and Infant Health Pilot Seed Grant Program Round 2 Specification Sheet

The Maternal and Infant Health Pilot Seed Grant Program Round 2

Funding Source	<p>Total funding for The Maternal and Infant Health Pilot Seed Grant Program Round 2 will be \$1,550,000 using eligible funds allocated from the Commission on Science Innovation and Technology (CSIT) FY24 budget</p> <p>CSIT aims to fund approximately 20 companies for awards of up to \$75,000 each.</p>
Program Purpose	<p>The goal of the Maternal and Infant Health Pilot Seed Grant Program Round 2 is to support innovation from researchers and entrepreneurs focused on developing technology, therapeutics, and other solutions to address maternal and infant health challenges in New Jersey. The grant will engage early-stage innovation-based companies in NJ to accelerate research and development of technologies to transform new discoveries from research stage into commercially viable products and services that impact maternal and infant health. The grant funds support the R&D development of technologies, products and services that enhances the quality of care and service delivery activities to women, infants, and healthcare agencies. The program focuses on outcomes that increase positive health outcomes throughout the Continuity of Care Stage: Prenatal through Postpartum.</p>
Target Industries	<p>The Maternal and Infant Health Pilot Seed Grant Program Round 2 is for companies conducting research and development or testing technologies in the following target areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life Sciences – (e.g., therapeutic drug development, medical device) • Technology (e.g., digital and telehealth services and platform development, mental health services) • Food and beverage (non-retail)
Eligible Applicants	<p>All applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria at the time of submission and throughout the application review period:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Authorized and in good standing to conduct business in New Jersey. b. Have a current New Jersey tax clearance certificate (listing New Jersey Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology). All certificates listing another state agency will be rejected. c. Have no more than 50 full-time equivalent workers (FTE calculated on a 35-hour work week) at time of application. d. Have a minimum of one (1) full-time worker (35 hours work week. A founder can be counted as a worker; a worker may be paid or unpaid. e. 50% or more of the cumulative hours worked by all workers, founders, and contractors must be conducted in NJ (calculated on an FTE basis – 35 hrs. per week). f. Have less than or equal to five million dollars (\$5,000,000) in prior calendar year sales revenue.
Eligible Uses	<p>The grant funding can be utilized to maintain R&D activities and cover general operating costs</p>
Ineligible Uses	<p>The grant funding cannot be utilized for the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct counseling and clinical service projects • Manufacturing of products for sale or commercial use • Real estate rental expenses

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient clinical trial expenses • Construction costs
<p>Application Process and Board Approval</p>	<p>Application process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applications will be open for a limited timeframe 2. A document completeness review will be done on a rolling basis as applications are received 3. Applicants with missing documentation will be notified and given 10 business days to submit missing documents 4. Only complete applications will be evaluated and scored. Applicants that have not submitted a tax clearance certificate and/or any documentation that verifies bonus points, at the time of application submission will be given up to the start of the Application Scoring period to submit the tax clearance and other documents for bonus points. If a tax clearance certificate is not submitted at the start of the application scoring period, the application will be declined. If the bonus point verification documents are not submitted by the start of the application scoring period, the points will not be applied. 5. An evaluation committee comprised of CSIT and NJEDA staff will review and assign a score to each application, after receiving qualitative input from Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). As part of the process, all Applicants with complete applications will be invited to make a brief presentation about their project and submit it to the evaluation committee and SME’s. 6. In order to be eligible for funding, an Applicant must receive a minimum score of 70 out of the available 100 points on the standard scoring criteria before allocation of bonus points Grants will be awarded to applicants with the highest overall scores, provided the minimum score is met, until program funds are expended. 7. Applicants can only submit one application for this grant. Multiple applications from the same company will NOT be accepted. Recipients of two or more active CSIT Seed or Demonstration Grants are ineligible for this Program. <p>Board Approval: The CSIT Program Committee will review scored applications and make funding recommendations to the CSIT board. The CSIT Board will make final decision on grant award winners.</p>
<p>Scoring criteria: (Based Upon Technical Proposal/Milestone and Budget Proposal)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation (up to 30 points) • Market Opportunity and Strategy (up to 20 points) (Referred to as “Go-to Market Strategy” and “Market Opportunity and Strategy” scoring criteria in prior rounds) • Implementation plan -budget and milestones (up to 20 points) • Economic and Broader impacts, such as social, health, education, housing, safety, infrastructure impacts (up to 10 points) • Team (up to 20 points)
<p>Bonus Points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NJ certified women-owned business (10 points) • NJ certified minority-owned business (10 points) • NJ certified veteran-owned business (10 points) • Company is using technology initially developed at a NJ university, under an executed license agreement with such university (15 points)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary place of business/research & development located within an opportunity zone eligible census tract or government restricted municipality (Trenton, Paterson, Atlantic City) (5 points) • Has not previously received a CSIT grant or voucher (10 points)
Grant Amounts/Duration	Eligible applicants can propose a project of up to one year in duration and with a maximum budget of \$75,000.
Cost	There is no fee to apply