

New Jersey Economic Development Authority
NJ Accelerate Pilot Program
NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY (NOFA)

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (“NJEDA” or “Authority”) will begin accepting applications for the (1) Rent Benefit and the (2) Event Sponsorship Benefit of the NJ Accelerate Pilot Program (“Program”) on **October 17, 2024 at 10:00 am EST**.

Note: This NOFA discusses and applies to the Rent Benefit and Event Sponsorship Benefit only. (The Authority began accepting applications for the Loan Benefits on September 30, 2024.)

Applications for the Rent Benefit and Event Sponsorship Benefit will be accepted on a rolling basis until **September 10, 2026 at 5:00 pm EST** or, until funds have been exhausted, whichever comes first.

The Program’s application link and instructions can be obtained **only** by contacting the Technology Innovation Products team (“Team”) at: njaccelerate@njeda.gov.

The Program will make available grant funding up to \$25,000 for Rent Benefits to eligible Graduate Companies of Approved Accelerators (“Graduate Companies”), and grant funding up to \$2,000 per event (capped at \$20,000 per approved Accelerator) for Event Sponsorship Benefit.

Purpose and Overview

In light of the positive performance of the original NJ Accelerate Program that was launched in 2020 and the increasing interest of both Accelerators and companies, the Authority has approved a two-year Program to partner with Approved Accelerators on advancing New Jersey early-stage innovative startups and building New Jersey’s Innovation Economy by offering Rent Benefits, Event Sponsorships and Investment Loan Benefits.

Funding for the Program

The Program will utilize the remaining funds from the original \$2,500,000 allocation available from the Economic Recovery Fund (ERF). NJEDA reserves the right to decrease that amount or increase it should additional funds become available.

(1) Rent Benefits

Eligible Graduate Companies

Companies that graduate from an Approved Accelerator are eligible to apply for the Rent Benefit. A list of the Approved Accelerators can be found at: <https://www.njeda.gov/njaccelerate/> .

Eligible Graduate Companies must meet the following criteria within six (6) months of graduation or the latter date of departure out of the physical space offered by the Approved Accelerator:

- Must be registered with NJ Treasury to conduct business in NJ and obtain a valid New Jersey Tax Clearance Certificate.
- Have at least 50% of the company's workforce work in New Jersey or pay New Jersey taxes by providing NJWR30 or NJ Registered Professional Employer Organization ("PEO") letter, or other forms of documentation to confirm job position, method of compensation, and time worked at the company, such as Forms 1099, W2, K1, job descriptions and offer letters, as deemed acceptable by the NJEDA.
- Have a minimum of two (2) founders in New Jersey devoting 100% of their professional time to the Company prior to application approval, with an average of 80% of that time in New Jersey. A founder is defined as either a "founder" of the Graduate Company or a C-level executive.
- Must have a sector focus on at least one of the Authority's listed "Targeted Industries", which can be found at: https://www.njeda.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Appendix-C-Targeted-Industries-Definitions-12.6.22_v2.pdf

Rent Benefit – Additional Eligibility and Application Requirements

To be eligible for the Rent Benefit, the eligible Graduate Company must have a lease or membership to an approved NJ Accelerate collaborative working space, which is defined as:

"Collaborative workspace" means a business facility approved under NJ Accelerate program, located in New Jersey, developed to provide flexible workspaces for early-stage innovation economy businesses, and designed to encourage community and collaboration within an interconnected environment in which multiple start-up businesses have access to shared community events and shared workplace accommodations including, but not limited to, kitchens and makerspaces. Collaborative workspaces must contain any of adjacent office, lab or hot desks in which employees of multiple companies, necessarily including, but not limited to, companies up to 3 years from the earliest date of formation, are conjoined under one roof by shared conference, meeting or gathering space.

A list of the approved NJ Accelerate collaborative working space can be found at:

<https://www.njeda.gov/njaccelerate/>

Grant Amount for the Rent Benefit

Up to 6 months of rent, not to exceed \$25,000, matching the rent or membership fees \$1 to \$1 at NJ Accelerate approved workspace locations will be awarded for this Program. An additional month of rent payment is available to Graduate Companies certified by the State of New Jersey as women or minority owned.

Application Submission and Program Requirements

Complete applications for the Rent Benefit will be reviewed on a rolling basis, first-come first

served. Eligible Graduate Companies **must contact** the Team at: njaccelerate@njeda.gov, in order to obtain an application link, password, and a complete set of instructions, including the required documents for submission.

At the time of application, Graduate Companies must submit, in addition to other documents, the following:

- Valid New Jersey Tax Clearance.
- 2-page executive summary of the Company.
- A letter of graduation from the Approved Accelerator confirming completion of the accelerator program.
- NJ WR-30 or Registered PEO letter, or other forms of documentation, such as Forms 1099, W2, K1, job descriptions and offer letters.
- Signed lease or membership agreement with an approved NJ Accelerate Collaborative Workspace.

The Authority reserves the right to conduct site visits, as deemed appropriate by the Authority, to confirm that funds are being used in accordance with eligible uses for the Rent Benefit.

2. Event Sponsorship – Eligibility and Application Requirements

Eligible Approved Accelerators

To be eligible to apply for the programmatic Event Sponsorship Benefit, the Accelerator must be registered to do business in New Jersey and must be one of the NJ Accelerate approved Accelerators at the time of application. A complete list of the Approved Accelerators is available at: [NJ Accelerate - NJEDA](#).

Approved Accelerators must certify on an annual basis:

- High prior participant satisfaction: as verified by either online testimonials or reference details; and
- A proven and documented or certified track record of success in prior graduates demonstrated in at least meeting a market rate proportion of graduates that have received follow-on funding from non-related parties, seeing strategic acquisition, significant (50%+) revenue growth in the last year or achieve an exit.

Eligible Uses for Event Benefit

Eligible events must have a minimum of 25 in person attendees and be located in New Jersey. Event Sponsorship Benefits can be used to cover costs related to the event held in New Jersey, such as catering, physical space, and marketing costs.

The event must allow for the following role and participation by NJEDA, including a speaking role representative, inclusion in marketing materials, website, exhibit table (if applicable), complimentary event registrations and attendees' contact information. Event Sponsorship approval

will be subject to review in advance of the event.

Grant Amount for the Event Sponsorship Benefit

Up to \$2,000 per event will be awarded for the Event Sponsorship Benefit. Each Approved Accelerator will be capped at \$20,000 in total sponsorship over the lifecycle of this pilot program. Full amount of the grant will be disbursed after the Programmatic Event has been approved.

If the Approved Accelerator has a focus on diversity and inclusion and meets the qualification parameters set by the State Office of Diversity & Inclusion or the designated D&I Officer within the NJEDA, the award is increased by 5% up to \$2,100 per event or \$21,000 total over the lifecycle of the pilot program.

Application Submission and Program Requirements

Eligible Approved Accelerators must contact the Team at: njaccelerate@njeda.gov to obtain an application and a complete set of instructions and required documents for submission. Complete applications for the Sponsorship benefit will be reviewed on a rolling basis, first-come first served.

At the time of application, Approved Accelerators must submit, in addition to other documents, the following:

- Event Agenda and Description, including the number of expected attendees
- Budget of Expenses
- Confirmation of the Authority's opportunity to participate in the event
- Current New Jersey Tax Clearance Certificate

Application Review Process for Both Benefits

The Authority will perform a review of all applications on a rolling basis for both the Rent Benefit and Event Sponsorship Benefit. Applications will first be reviewed for completeness to ensure that all necessary application information and documents are submitted and complete. Applicants will be given 14 business days to cure any deficiencies by submitting missing or incomplete documents ("cure period").

At the sole discretion of the Authority and at any time during application review, the Authority may ask for clarification of the information included in the application, including but not limited to narrative responses, supporting documentation, and attachments.

Grant Agreement and Funding Disbursement

The Authority will enter into a Grant Agreement with the Approved Accelerator for the Event Sponsorship Benefit and with the Graduate Company for the Rent Benefit detailing the awarded grant amount and applicable terms. The Approved Accelerator/Graduate Company is responsible for assuring the compliance of the project with all terms and conditions of the application and the

specific Benefit funding requirements. The Authority reserves the right to recapture any grant funds used for ineligible purposes. The full amount of the grant will be disbursed upon the execution of the Grant Agreement.

Fees

No fees will be charged for the Rent Benefit and Event Sponsorship Benefit applications.

Additional Requirements and Information

Comprehensive information about the NJ Accelerate program is available at [NJ Accelerate - NJEDA](#). Questions concerning this Program should be submitted to: NJAccelerate@njeda.gov

Funding for this grant is subject to State and Federal statutes including, but not limited to, the following, which may impact affiliates: N.J.S.A. 52:32-60.1, et seq., which prevents the New Jersey government entities from certain dealings with businesses engaged in prohibited activities in Belarus or Russia; Compliance with the list of “Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons” promulgated by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), <https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov>; N.J.S.A. 24:6I-49 which provides that the following are not eligible for most State or local economic incentives (a) a person or entity issued a license to operate as a cannabis cultivator, manufacturer, wholesaler, distributor, retailer, or delivery service, or that employs a certified personal use cannabis handler to perform work for or on behalf of a cannabis establishment, distributor, or delivery service; and (b) a property owner, developer, or operator of a project to be used, in whole or in part, by or to benefit a cannabis cultivator, manufacturer, wholesaler, distributor, retailer, or delivery service, or to employ a certified personal use cannabis handler to perform work for or on behalf of a cannabis establishment, distributor, or delivery service; and N.J.S.A. 52:13D-12, et seq., which prohibits a member of the Legislature or a State officer or employee or their partners or a corporation in which they owns or controls more than 1% of the stock to undertake or execute any contract, agreement, sale, or purchase of \$25.00 or more, made, entered into, awarded or granted by any State agency, with certain limited exceptions including grant awards by the New Jersey Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology.