

U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION ON GRANTS.GOV

Office of Entrepreneurial Development Community Navigator Pilot Program (CNPP)

Funding Opportunity Number: CNP-2021-01 FAQ (Set 1)

1. What is the legal authority for the Community Navigators Pilot Program?

The American Rescue Plan Act, 2021 (Pub. L. No. 117-2, § 5004) authorizes SBA to establish the Community Navigator Pilot Program to make grants to, or enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with, private nonprofit organizations, SBA Resource Partners, States, Tribes, and units of local government. OED will support the Community Navigator Pilot Program. OED's mission is to help small businesses start, grow, and compete in global markets by providing quality training, counseling, and access to resources.

2. What is the goal for the Community Navigator Pilot Program?

The Community Navigator Pilot Program is designed to provide high quality support and assistance with pandemic relief programs and recovery services to small businesses and entrepreneurs. Recovery services can include financial assistance, access to capital supports, contracting and procurement assistance, marketing, operations, and business development, export and importing, and industry specific training, among other areas of technical assistance to aid businesses in stabilization and expansion. Programming that focuses on supporting communities where English is a second language and that offers technical assistance in languages other than English is encouraged.

3. Who is eligible to apply for a Community Navigator Pilot Program Grant?

- A Nonprofit having a 501(c) status with the IRS.
- An economic development organization or similar organization.
- Native American tribal organization (other than Federally recognized tribal governments).
- Native American tribal government (Federally recognized).
- County governments.
- State governments.
- City or township governments.
- SBA Resource Partners:
 - Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs).
 - Women's Business Centers.

- Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE); and
- Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOCs).
- Community Development Financial Institutions.
- Nonprofit Colleges and Universities.

Please refer to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Section 3.2 – Eligible Applicants for complete information.

4. Who is Not eligible to apply for a Community Navigator Pilot Program Grant?

The following organizations will automatically be considered ineligible, and their applications will be rejected without being evaluated:

- Applications from For-profit organizations
- Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships).
- Applications from foreign entities.
- Any organization that owes an outstanding and unresolved financial obligation to the federal government;
- Any organization with an outstanding and unresolved material deficiency reported under the requirements of the Single Audit Act within the past three years.
- Any organization that is currently suspended, debarred or otherwise prohibited from receiving awards of contracts or grants from the Federal government
- Any organization that has filed for bankruptcy within the past five (5) years
- Any organization that had an officer or agent acting on its behalf convicted, of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding twenty-four (24) months.

Please refer to NOFO Section 3.3 – Ineligible Applicants for complete information.

5. What procedural steps does an applicant have to take prior to applying for a Community Navigator Pilot Program Grant?

In order to submit an application for the Community Navigator Pilot Program Grant, you will need to first register in Grants.gov. Creating an account is easy however you will also need to register in SAM.gov if you have not already done so.

Complete organization instructions can be found on Grants.gov here:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

- a) Obtain a DUNS Number: All entities applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a DUNS Number from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B). Applicants must enter the DUNS Number in the data entry field labeled "Organizational DUNS"

on the SF-424 form. For more detailed instructions for obtaining a DUNS Number, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html>

- b) Register with SAM: All organizations applying online through Grants.gov must register and maintain registration with the System for Award Management (SAM). Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov. SAM registration must be renewed annually and always kept current. For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html>

Because there may be delays in processing SAM.gov registrations during peak times, the applicant will have to attest that it has submitted its SAM.gov registration to apply. If you are having problems with the registration process, please contact the Grants.gov helpdesk within 24 - 48 hours.(800) 518-4126 or via email support@grants.gov

- c) Create a Grants.gov Account: The next step is to register an account with Grants.gov. Follow the on-screen instructions or refer to the detailed instructions here: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration.html>
- d) Add a Profile to a Grants.gov Account: A profile in Grants.gov corresponds to a single applicant organization the user represents (i.e., an applicant) or an individual applicant. If you work for or consult with multiple organizations and have a profile for each, you may log in to one Grants.gov account to access all your grant applications. To add an organizational profile to your Grants.gov account, enter the DUNS Number for the organization in the DUNS field while adding a profile. For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/add-profile.html>
- e) EBiz POC Authorized Profile Roles: After you register with Grants.gov and create an Organization Applicant Profile, the organization applicant's request for Grants.gov roles and access are sent to the EBiz POC. The EBiz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles, which may include the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you have been assigned the AOR role. For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/authorize-roles.html>

- f) **Track Role Status:** To track your role request, refer to:
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/track-role-status.html>
Electronic Signature: When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization applicant with the AOR role that submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC must authorize people who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization as a user with the AOR role; this step is often missed, and it is crucial for valid and timely submissions.

6. How does an organization Submit an Application to SBA via Grants.gov?

The most up-to-date instructions for application submission via Grants.gov can be found at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>. To begin, complete, and submit your application,

- a) Navigate to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>;
- b) Click “Search for Opportunity Package”.
- c) In the “Funding Opportunity Number” field, enter “CNP-2021-01”.
- d) Click “Search”.
- e) Click the “Apply” link that corresponds to the competition to which you wish to apply (i.e., the 2021 Community Navigator Pilot Program).
- f) Enter your email address (if you would like to receive updates from Grants.gov regarding this grant opportunity) or check the box that indicates you do not wish to provide it, then click “Submit”.
- g) Choose to apply using Workspace by clicking “Login to Apply Now” or choose to download the legacy application package by clicking “Download Package”; and
- h) Follow the instructions provided on the Grants.gov website and on each webpage to complete and submit your application.

7. How will the organization apply for an award under this NOFO?

SBA requires all application packages be submitted electronically via www.grants.gov. To submit an application through <https://www.grants.gov>, the applicant must register for a Grants.gov User ID and password. Note that this process can take between three to five business days or as long as four weeks if all steps are not completed correctly. SBA strongly recommends that applicants start early and not wait until the approaching deadline date before logging in, registering, reviewing the application instructions, and applying.

Please note that organizations already registered with Grants.gov do not need to register; however, all registered organizations must keep their SAM registration, which includes CCR database registration, up to date through sam.gov or their application will be accepted by Grants.gov.

Applicants must register as organizations, not as individuals.

8. What if an organization has technical issues with the Grants.gov System?

If a grants.gov system issue that is believed to threaten your ability to complete a submission in a timely manner, (i) print any error message received and (ii) call the Grants.gov Contact Center at (800) 518-4726 for assistance. Ensure to obtain a case number regarding any communications with Grants.gov. Please note that problems with an applicant's computer system or equipment are not considered systems issues. For example, a Grants.gov system issue is an issue occurring in connection with the operations of Grants.gov itself, such as the temporary loss of service by Grants.gov due to unexpected volume of traffic or failure of information technology systems.

9. What are some hints to keep in mind when developing the application package?

- a) **Read the Notice of Funding Opportunity Carefully**, SBA recommends all persons involved in the development of the application package carefully read and understand all aspects and requirements of the Notice of Funding Opportunity.
- b) **Make a checklist** of all documents required and all tasks to be completed that will constitute a final application package.
- c) **Ensure that the project plan, budget, and budget narrative are internally consistent.** If there are activities within the project plan, they should correspond to what is requested in the budget and explained in the budget narrative.
- d) **Any applications received after the deadline will not be considered.** This makes it critical that all applicants are registered in SAM.gov and have an active DUNS number (Dun & Bradstreet Created in 1962, the **Data Universal Numbering System** or D-U-N-S® Number is D&B's copyrighted, proprietary means of identifying business entities. If an applicant is not currently registered in SAM.gov **and** have acquired or renewed your DUNS number, SBA recommends doing so immediately. Please note, it can take up to 2 to 4 weeks to complete the SAM.gov registration process. It is important to note that because there may be delays in processing SAM.gov registrations during peak times, the applicant will have to attest that it has submitted its SAM.gov registration to apply. If you are having problems with the registration process, please contact the Grants.gov helpdesk within 24 - 48 hours.
- e) **If possible, submit the application a few days before the deadline.** There are errors that can make Grants.gov reject the application, such as using unusual characters that label the attachments. When the applicant submits their application to Grants.gov, they will receive an email that the application has been received. **NOTE: THIS DOES NOT**

MEAN IT HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY GRANTS.GOV. If there are no irregularities in the package, like the aforementioned unusual characters, then the applicant will receive a **2nd email** that states the application has been **ACCEPTED BY GRANTS.GOV.**

- f) **It is very important that all persons participating in the development of the application package continually meet and coordinate their various assignments** (i.e., project plan, budget, required documents, etc.) to ensure there is **one complete application package that is internally consistent and meets all requirements within the NOFO.** It is recommended that persons who have not developed particular parts of the application read and proof what others have developed to ensure it is clearly written, follows required components within the NOFO, and can be easily understood by any SBA reviewers assessing the application

10. To clarify, is each Tier amount (\$1M, \$2.5M, and \$5M) per a two-year (24 month) funding period?

Funding awards are for the full performance period (two-year period) at the exact funding levels.

Please refer to NOFO sections 1.1.12 and 1.1.13 – Project Duration and Project Starting date for complete information.

11. Can an applicant request a dollar amount less than those indicated in the NOFO?

Successful applicants must reflect budget and budget narratives for use of total award amounts by tier of submission: Tier 1 at \$5M, Tier 2 at \$2.5M and Tier 3 at \$1M for the full 24-month performance period.

12. Can a religious organization apply to be a Hub?

Yes, providing the entity is a private nonprofit organization as described in section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from tax under section 501 (c) of such code.

Please refer to NOFO Sections 3.1 and 3.2 – Eligible Applicants for complete information.

13. Are 501(c)(6) organizations eligible to apply?

Yes, private nonprofit organizations as described in section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from tax under section 501 (c) of such code are eligible to participate as either a “Hub” or “Spoke”.

Please refer to NOFO Sections 3.1 and 3.2 – Eligible Applicants for complete information.

14. There is a page-max or cap mentioned in the NOFO. Does that max (20 pages) apply to the entire package or just one item/section such as the Technical Proposal (but the budget, etc. would be additional pages)?

The 20-page maximum applies to the Technical Proposal (portion) of your application. The other required documents are ‘additional pages’ to your package.

Please refer to NOFO section 4.1.29(a) – Project Narrative for complete information.

15. Will existing SBA grantees and ‘new’ organizations (never having received funding from SBA) be evaluated differently?

There are no proposal evaluation criteria outside of those identified in the NOFO. Experience serving small business clients should be articulated in your application, regardless of whether you have been or are currently an SBA funded resource partner. This is an open competition for Hub and Spoke collaborations to further advance services, promote accessibility – inclusivity – and recovery resources.

Please refer to NOFO section 5.1 – Proposal Evaluation for complete information.

16. Are Past Performance requirements solely isolated to services previously delivered in a Hub/Spoke-like coalition or can we include other relevant experience in our proposal?

Your Past Performance should reflect the most relevant service/experience aligned with the service you propose to provide in your Community Navigator Pilot Program grant application including the markets to be serviced, programs offered to the small business clients, technical expertise on business coaching, etc.

Please refer to NOFO section 4.1.2(e) – Past Performances for complete information.

17. There is no stated “match” requirement in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. Is this correct? SBA is not requiring any applicant to state, attract, or match a portion of the award they may receive as a Community Navigator awardee?

This is correct. There is no funding “match” requirement stated in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. Though, it is important to note that should an applicant’s proposal include additional funding, the applicant will be required to meet the terms of their proposal.

18. While the Notice of Funding Opportunity clearly states that the applicant ‘Hub’ must be a private nonprofit, can a “Spoke” be a for-profit?

Yes, “Spokes” can be either a private nonprofit or a for profit.

The Small Business Administration will oversee the Federal Cost Principles of the applicant "hub." However, it is the applicant’s “hub” responsibility to uphold the consortia to the same Federal Cost Principles listed in 2 CFR 200 and ensure that the “spoke” and all involved in the award are in compliance with the applicable federal and grant requirements.

19. Can an organization be part of multiple proposals as either a hub or spoke or both?

Organizations can be part of multiple proposals (submissions); however, an entity may only receive funding through one grant award.

For example, if you are a proposed Spoke organization listed in both Applicant A (Hub A) and Applicant B's (Hub B) proposal and both Applicant A and Applicant B are selected to receive awards, you may only receive funding through one of the Applicants, not both.

20. Are we allowed to charge clients for service offered by Hub and Spokes? What if one or more of our coalition members currently charge clients for such services (can that practice be ‘grandfathered’ into this model if prohibited under your grant)?

No. The Community Navigator Pilot Program is very specific in that the purpose of the grant is to ensure the delivery of free community navigator services to current or prospective owners of eligible businesses. No one may charge for services funded by the Community Navigators Pilot Program grant.