2019

Strengthening Communities Partnership

Application

The Allegheny Conference on Community Development is inviting proposals for participation in the Strengthening Communities Partnership (SCP), an initiative to build community development-oriented partnerships between the corporate community and communities across southwestern Pennsylvania. Through a unique partnership among its investors, the Conference has built the SCP program to fuel economic development efforts in local communities by bringing financial, planning and technical resources to community development groups in the region.

Organizational Background

The Allegheny Conference on Community Development and its affiliates – the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, the Pennsylvania Economy League of Greater Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance (collectively, the "Conference") – work together to stimulate economic growth and improve the quality of life spanning 10 counties in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Founded in 1944, the Conference is one of the nation's leading economic and community development organizations, combining strong private sector leadership with commitment from public sector partners. Its strategic focus is creating a more competitive economic climate and marketing the Pittsburgh region for business investment, job creation and talent attraction. The Conference relies on its Regional Investors Council (RIC) – leaders of more than 300 companies and organizations – to provide time, talent and resources to advance the organization's agenda.

The Conference current agenda *creating a Next Generation Economy for All* focuses on improving the region's vitality through efforts in support of strong economy, thriving people and quality of place. Part of this agenda focuses on development and revitalization in southwestern Pennsylvania's struggling communities. The SCP is one arm of the Conference's agenda that directly supports the revitalization and development of communities that have not been able, to date, to fully experience the benefits of the region's economic transformation.

Program Description

The SCP is intended to assist community-based organizations to advance economic development goals, planning and practices in their communities.

The current SCP communities' efforts include land recycling, business district revitalization, housing redevelopment, remediation of blighted/abandoned property, development of green space/green infrastructure, workforce development, educational programming and other community planning. In general, the SCP program will support economic development activities in the communities that are built on a strong local consensus and can achieve sustainable, positive change.

The SCP program helps community-based economic development organizations build long-term, effective partnerships with businesses, access funding and connect to the broad network of resources within the Allegheny Conference and other allied organizations. The benefits to participating communities include:

I. Regular interactions with Conference staff and partners around opportunities for business investment and community planning strategies
II. Access to technical assistance from Conference staff and partners, which may include:
    a. Relevant professional services (e.g. architectural, marketing, finance, and legal)
    b. Collaboration with students and faculty from regional colleges and universities
    c. Communication regarding funding, professional development, and educational opportunities
III. Support in seeking funding from private and public sources, particularly the Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) tax credits
IV. Invitations to Conference member events for networking
V. Promotion of community work across digital platforms
VI. Access to peer mentoring opportunities and learning networks
VII. Participation in impact studies and program evaluations

Organization Qualifications

The SCP program is seeking applications from community development organizations. Community development organizations are organizations who focus on economic development for a specific, geographically-identified area. Applications are being sought from organizations in two categories:

- Emerging community development organizations – small organizations with little to no experience in applying for NAP tax credit programs. Applicants in this category should have a 501c3, or a fiduciary agent that is one.
- Experienced community development organizations – organizations that have completed at least one NAP tax credit program and are looking to advance to a long-term NPP or a second NPP. These organizations should be their own 501c3, with experience implementing a NAP tax credit funding program.

Successful applicants in both categories will demonstrate existence of unified community leadership, shared vision of community development, ability to collaborate local partners and elected officials and commitment to tracking and measuring progress.

Application Guidelines

Applicants should provide the following information in their applications.

1. Organizational overview
2. Overview of your community, including defining your geography served, overall demographics, local businesses and industries, and economic catalysts
3. Description of current and planned programming for your community, including areas of focus, potential barriers, and partnerships
4. Overview of any strategic plans for your community, including the process and partners involved in the development
    a. Emerging communities: if there is not a plan in place, please include narrative that maps out your strategy to craft and implement a plan
    b. Established communities: please attach your current community plan
5. Overview of technical assistance and other benefits that the SCP program can provide to you
6. NAP application funding plan
    a. Emerging organizations should indicate their plan for the potential NAP funding and a list of small projects to implement that plan, as well as potential partners

b. Established organizations should provide a general summary of past NAP funding program and a narrative on the next round of funding you plan to pursue and how the SCP program can support that

To apply, please use the form in the Appendix. Applicants should answer all the questions in the form with a sufficient level of detail.

Application Timeline

1. Responding organizations must be eligible for Neighborhood Assistance Program funding under DCED guidelines[1], and be located in the 10 counties of southwestern Pennsylvania.[2]
2. Written responses to this RFP should be submitted to the Allegheny Conference on Community Development no later than **June 28, 2019**. Please email your proposal to bthatcher@alleghenyconference.org.
3. All inquiries or requests for clarification may be directed to Becky Thatcher by email: bthatcher@alleghenyconference.org.
4. From the initial set of responses, finalists will be invited to submit additional materials **and make presentations to a review committee**. Final award decisions will be made in August 2019.

Terms and Conditions

I. All proposals must be signed by an individual authorized to respond to this request. Proposals that are not signed will be rejected.
II. Conditional responses will not be considered.
III. Proposers are responsible for all costs and expenses associated with their preparation.
IV. All submissions will be the property of the Conference. The Conference has no legal affiliation with the NPP program and does not guarantee funding from any of the aforementioned programs identified in Section II beyond a duly approved award grant.

[1] https://dced.pa.gov/programs/neighborhood-assistance-program-nap/
[2] Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington, and Westmoreland Counties

Appendix A

SCP Application for admission

Organization name:
Name of Community applicant for SCP program:
Contact person:
Contact phone:
Contact Email:

1. **Organization overview:**

Please describe your organization and its history and tell us about your current staffing, board structure and budget, including funding sources. Indicate whether your organization qualifies as established or emerging, as it pertains to the outline in Organization Qualifications.

2. Community overview:

Please help us understand your community, its size and geography, demographic and business composition, including potential market drivers such as anchor institutions, corporations, and other economic catalysts. Tell us about its challenges and opportunities for community development.

3. Description of Programs and Projects:

Please tell us about your current and planned programming for your community. Help us understand what are your top priorities and why, and what challenges you anticipate in implementing your plans. Please tell us how have your planning and implementation efforts been shaped by residents, local partners and elected officials.

4. Community Plans:

Please provide an overview of the strategic plans that exist for your community. Include the name of the plan, how community input informed the plan, and whether or not the plan has been adopted by the municipality. If you are an emerging organization, please include a narrative describing your plans to craft and implement a strategic plan for your community.

5. How can the SCP program support your community?

Please tell us about specific areas of technical assistance or other help that you would be interested to receive through your participation in the SCP program.

6. NAP funding strategy:

If you are applying as an emerging organization, please tell us about your current level of preparedness for participation in the NAP. Please help us understand how the SCP program can support your future NAP participation.

If you are applying as an established organization, please tell us about your past participation in the NAP and your future plans. Please help us understand how the SCP program can support your future NAP participation.

All Organizations: IRS 501c3 determination letter – please attach as Appendix B

If organization name different from organization listed on application, please include a letter or MOU to show relationship between applicant organization and fiduciary organization.

Established Organizations: please attach your community's strategic plan as Appendix C

All Organizations: please include a letter or support from your municipality to join the SCP program as Appendix D