



New Jersey Economic Development Authority (“NJEDA”)

Film & Digital Media Studio Infrastructure Program (“Program”) - Pilot Grant Program

Notice of Funding Availability

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (“NJEDA” or “Authority”) will begin accepting applications for the *Program* on May 18, 2023 at 10:00am. The application can be accessed at: [Film & Digital Media Studio Infrastructure Program - NJEDA](#). Applications for this program will be available for ninety days after the launch of the online application. Applications must be submitted by August 16, 2023 at 5:00 pm. The Program will make use of \$9,500,000 for infrastructure improvements and sitework in support of the development of a film or digital media studio production facility. This is a competitive application process and following the closure of the application period, applications will be evaluated for completeness and eligibility and then scored by a committee of NJEDA staff. The highest scoring applications will be presented to the NJEDA Board for approval.

Purpose

The Program is established to fund infrastructure improvements and sitework in support of the development of a film or digital media studio production facility. The Program is established to stimulate economic growth and enhance the State’s long-term economic competitiveness by supporting and encouraging strategic economic development investments in the designated Film & Digital Media industry target sector. The Program will provide a minimum grant of \$50,000 and a maximum grant of \$4,750,000 per approved project.

Overview

Governor Murphy’s Fiscal Year 2023 Appropriations Act (“Act”) allocates significant State funding for numerous strategic economic development investments to support key industries, advance the innovation economy, continue to bolster recovery, and spur statewide growth. These strategic investments include \$15 million for a Film Industry Strategic Support Fund to grow and strengthen the state’s film and digital media industry, including attracting film studio production facilities to the state and expanding job opportunities.

Program Details

The Program is a competitive grant program that will proactively deploy \$9.5 million to fund infrastructure improvements and sitework (“Project”) in support of the development of a film or digital media studio production facility.

The Program will provide funding to eligible applicants as described below that are undertaking eligible Projects that support the development of a film or digital media studio production facility.

Eligibility

The Program will provide a minimum grant of \$50,000 and a maximum grant of \$4,750,000 per approved project to the below eligible applicants that are undertaking infrastructure improvements or sitework to support the development of a film or digital media studio production facility (collectively defined as “Applicants”):

- Municipalities,
- Municipal entities,
- Counties,
- County entities, and/or
- State instrumentalities.

Eligible Projects are limited to infrastructure improvements and sitework in support of the development of a film or digital media studio production facility; such infrastructure improvements may include but are not limited to the following:

- Roadwork or transportation improvements
- Water and/or sewer lines/service
- Gas lines/service
- Telecommunications
- High speed broadband
- Electrical utility lines/grid/supply
- Accessibility and safety improvements (i.e. sidewalks, fire hydrants)
- Site remediation or site work on government owned property

All Projects shall be subject to prevailing wage law and compliance with other labor standards requirements.

Additional applicant requirements:

- Must be in substantial good standing with the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection at the time of application. A current tax clearance certificate must be provided prior to approval to demonstrate the applicant is in substantial good standing with the NJ Division of Taxation unless the applicant is not required to register with the Division of Taxation.

Application Submission and Review Process

Applications submitted after the application deadline will not be accepted or reviewed.

To apply, an applicant must register or log into the online application portal, complete all required application questions fully, and upload all required PDF document attachments including the following:

- Project overview and description;
- Letter from the studio production facility confirming studio plans to build/expand studio production facility (indicate sf size) on the site with an estimated number of full-time equivalent

jobs when operational, and that the proposed infrastructure improvements in Applicant's proposal are being undertaken in support of the studio production facility;

- Project budget (Sources & Uses line-item detail) including evidence of additional financing if applicable per Project budget;
- Project development timeline;
- Experience and capacity of the applicant (and contractors/consultants if applicable) to implement Project within Project development timeline; and
- Narrative and/or documentation regarding Small, Women, Minority, Veteran Business Enterprises ("SWMVBE") participation, if applicable

After the close of the application period, EDA staff will review all applications for completeness and will respond to the applicant(s) to request any necessary clarifications to the application(s). Applicants will be given ten business days to cure any deficiencies, or the application will be withdrawn.

Applications deemed complete will be reviewed and scored by NJEDA evaluation scoring committee. Applications will be scored on a scale of 0 - 100 points, with award recommendations limited to applications that meet or exceed the minimum score requirement of 65 points.

Scoring factors and points will include:

- Applicant readiness to proceed *(up to 35 pts)*
- Project merits (community and regional economic impact and benefits of the proposed project as catalyst for and connection to local development) *(up to 35 pts)*
- Project Feasibility *(up to 15 pts)*
- Applicant (and contractor/consultant) experience & capacity *(up to 10 pts)*
- SWMVBE participation *(up to 5 pts)*

Applications that meet the minimum score requirement of 65 out of a possible 100 points will initially be separated into two groups –

1. applications in support of a Film or Digital Media Studio production facility in excess of 250,000 square feet, and
2. applications in support of a Film or Digital Media Studio production facility less than 250,000 square feet

Provided that one or more applications are submitted in each group that meet or exceed the minimum score requirement of 65 points, the highest ranked application from each group shall be recommended to the Board for approval. Following this step, all remaining applications will be merged into a single group and recommended to the Board for award approval starting with the highest scored application until all Program funding is awarded.

If an applicant requests grant funding for an eligible Project but there are not sufficient Program funds available to fund the full grant request, NJEDA would inform the applicant of the amount of grant funds available. If the applicant wishes to proceed, the applicant would be required to fund the difference to fill the gap to ensure the submitted Project proposal is undertaken as described.

If all Program funds are not awarded during the initial application period, then applications will be reopened on a rolling basis with applications that meet the minimum score being recommended for award based on the order in which completed and eligible applications are received.

All eligible applications will proceed to the Board for approvals, and all applications which have not been declined due to non-discretionary reasons will also proceed to the Board.

Funding Disbursements

NJEDA will disburse grants only to the applicant. The applicant shall be responsible for assuring the compliance of the project with all terms and conditions of the application and the Program funding requirements.

Once a Project is approved for funding, NJEDA will enter into a grant agreement with the applicant detailing the Project to be funded, eligible Project costs, the amount of grant funding, and all financial programmatic requirements.

The grant funds will be disbursed either incrementally as eligible Project expenses are incurred and prorated with other funding sources if applicable with the NJEDA's standard construction retainage withheld until Project completion, or grant funds may be disbursed in coordination with the other funder's disbursement process if applicable.

Funding disbursement requests must be evidenced by documentation supporting that the expenses were incurred, work has been performed in accordance with prevailing wage and labor standards compliance requirements, and work was done consistent with project approval and eligible uses of program funding.

If the approved Film or Digital Media Studio Infrastructure Project has not been completed and the supported studio production facility has been terminated (for example, applicable redevelopment agreement is terminated, site plan approvals are denied or expire), the Applicant will no longer be eligible for any remaining unused grant funds.

Final payment of grant funds will be made upon the NJEDA's inspection of completed Project and receipt of certificate of completion.

Grant Amounts

The minimum amount of grant funding is \$50,000 and the maximum amount of grant funding is \$4,750,000 to any one Project. Grant funding may fund 100% of an approved Project's costs.

Fees

A fee of \$1,000 is due at time of application submission.

Additional Information

Comprehensive information about the Film & Digital Media Studio Infrastructure Program is available at [Film & Digital Media Studio Infrastructure Program - NJEDA](#)