



**New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA)
New Jersey Asset Activation Planning Grant Program
*Notice of Funding Availability***

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (“NJEDA” or “Authority”) will begin accepting applications for the New Jersey Asset Activation Planning Grant Program at 10:00 a.m. EST May 7, 2024. The application can be accessed at: <https://www.njeda.com/asset-activation-planning-grant>. Applications will be accepted on a first come, first served basis during a 90-day period ending at 11:59 p.m. EST August 5, 2024, or until grant funding is exhausted. The Program was allocated continued funding in 2023 for new grant awards, and the rolling grant award process has \$300,000 in remaining funds. Grant awards may be up to \$50,000 for individual qualifying applications.

Further detailed information is available in the Asset Activation Planning Grant Program specifications: <https://www.njeda.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Asset-Activation-Planning-Grant-Program-Specifications.pdf>

Overview

The shifting economic and development context in New Jersey has left an array of underutilized properties and infrastructure throughout the state in urban, suburban, and rural communities alike. Former assets which are now liabilities require innovative development to activate their potential and contribute to the State’s economy. In an effort to revitalize underutilized or unutilized public properties or distressed assets in New Jersey, the NJEDA created the Asset Activation Planning Grant Program (“Program”), which was approved as a pilot on March 9, 2022, by the NJEDA Board and was provided \$400,000 of the Economic Recovery Fund to fund projects up to \$50,000 in grant awards.

The Program provides grants for pre-development planning work that demonstrates viability and prepares implementation of projects that will activate public assets and contribute to the revitalization of local communities and the regional economy. This Program ‘invests in communities’ and ‘makes government work better’ - two major economic development priorities adopted by the NJEDA Board and laid out in Governor Murphy’s Economic Plan.

The NJEDA began accepting applications for the Asset Activation Grant in July 2022, and subsequently awarded grants to ten planning projects throughout the State. In April 2023, the NJEDA Board approved a new round of grants funded by utilizing \$500,000 from the FY2023 State Budget appropriated to the Authority for the use of planning grants. Five more planning projects received awards in that round, and because of the rolling grant award process \$300,000 of existing funds remain available, and the program will re-open for applications beginning May 7, 2024.

Eligibility

Qualified applicants for the Program include municipalities, counties, redevelopment agencies, independent authorities, non-profit entities, and private for-profit entities that meet additional criteria and hold a valid New Jersey tax clearance certificate.

Applicants may add strategic partners whose experience, knowledge, skills, and ability may augment the capabilities of the proposed planning project team.

An applicant in a lead role for a proposal is the entity that is the sole recipient of grant funds and responsible for all terms of the grant agreement. The lead role applicant will serve as the primary point of contact with the Authority, submit any requests for fund disbursement, and provide reports to the Authority.

The strategic partnership must be recognized by a signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) or a written agreement between the partner and the lead applicant. The MOU or written agreement must be included with the completed application.

An applicant may only submit one application in a lead role but may be included as a partner in additional applications where they play a non-lead role. Any named strategic partner or partners included in the proposal cannot be changed without the prior written consent of the Authority. An entity in a lead role that received prior Asset Activation grant funds may not apply again.

Applications must include a letter of approval from the executive of the public entities that hold ownership of the subject property or have the development oversight and authority to close the property. **Assets owned by the State of New Jersey are not eligible.** Assets owned by independent authorities, commissions, boards, or other entities of the State of New Jersey *are eligible* when accompanied by a letter of approval from the body's executive with development oversight and authority, as discussed above.

A proposal on behalf of a county or independent authority does not preclude a municipality within that county; or municipality or county within the boundary of an independent authority; or independent authority whose boundaries overlap a municipality or county from submitting their own proposal.

An award of grant funding does not imply approval of planning, analysis, use, sale, or divestment of any assets or property.

Eligible Uses

Planning projects may include, but are not limited to:

- Redevelopment Planning
- Conceptual Design
- Feasibility Study
- Land-use Planning
- Economic Analysis
- Market Analysis
- Legal Analysis

Projects should target deficient, under-utilized, or vacant land, buildings, or infrastructure owned by a county, municipality, district, public authority, public commission, public agency, or other political subdivision or public body.

Grant Amounts

The maximum grant amount is \$50,000.

The potential award amount is based upon current information about funding availability; NJEDA reserves the right to increase that amount and number of awards should additional funds become

available.

Application Submission and Review Process (including Scoring)

Applications for the New Jersey Asset Activation Planning Grant Program will be accepted during a 90-day window or until grant funding is exhausted. 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. NJEDA staff will review applications in the order they are received for completeness and eligibility. At the sole discretion of the Authority, NJEDA staff may ask for any necessary clarifications of the information provided in the application, including, but not limited to, responses, documentation, and attachments. Applicants will be given 5 business days to respond to the clarification requests. If at the end of this period, the applicant is non-responsive, the application will be deemed withdrawn.

Each application must contain the following documents:

- A. Required Application Information:
 - 1. A fully completed online application
 - 2. New Jersey Tax Clearance Certificate
 - 3. Religious Activities questionnaire (if applicable)
 - 4. Signed Letter of Approval from the chief executive of the entity holding ownership of the subject property or asset must be digitally attached with the application
 - 5. Completed Legal Questionnaire
 - 6. Application Fee (or fee waiver request if applicable)

- B. Required Proposal Components of Application
 - 1. Public Asset Description
 - 2. Planning Project Details, including:
 - a. Planning Activities
 - b. Project Milestones and Deliverables
 - c. Project Team Roles
 - d. Public Engagement
 - e. Project budget and Grant funding requirement
 - 3. Asset Activation Merits, including:
 - a. Asset challenges and considerations
 - b. Regional market constrains and considerations
 - c. Future uses, development, or activities at the site
 - d. Connection to the State's economic and development objectives
 - 4. Background & Experience including examples of similar planning projects.
 - 5. Strategic Partners Memorandum of Understanding or written agreement (if applicable).

Note: Applications must include plans for specific deliverables that can be fully completed (with copies provided to EDA) by six months after execution of the grant agreement. Upon written request for an extension (*up to two months*) of the plan's final delivery, the NJEDA has the sole discretion to authorize the extension.

Applications deemed complete will be reviewed and scored by an evaluation committee that will be comprised of NJEDA staff. Applications will be scored on a scale of 0 – 100 points. As further detailed in the Asset Activation Planning Grant Program specifications, applications will be evaluated and scored based on the following criteria:

- 1. Their "Asset Impact," which demonstrates the magnitude of improved utilization a project will have on a public asset, the local community, and regional economy. (0 - 40 points)

2. The project's "purpose and merits," which address locality-specific needs and challenges that have precluded prior development of the asset, and a plan for long term viability of a project. (0 - 20 points)
3. The demonstration of the applicant's previous experience with similar planning projects. (0 - 20 points)
4. Community Engagement aspects of the proposed planning work. (0 - 10 points)
5. Municipal Revitalization Index Score, which ranks New Jersey's municipalities according to eight separate indicators that measure diverse aspects of social, economic, physical, and fiscal conditions in each locality. (0 - 10 points)

Applications that meet a **minimum score of 65** will be recommended to the Program Director for grant funding in the order in which applications were submitted.

Disbursements

Grant funds will only be disbursed to the lead role entity, who will also be responsible for:

- (1) assuring that any strategic partners and/or subcontractors are in compliance with all terms and conditions of the grant agreement; and
- (2) any payments due to any municipal, county, or strategic partners.

Grant disbursements will follow a uniform disbursement schedule. The lead entity will receive 50 percent of the grant amount upon execution of grant agreement, 25 percent upon submission of a mid-way progress report, and 25 percent upon completion and submission of a final plan and final progress report. At a minimum, the progress reports must include a summary of funds expended to date as well as a narrative detailing milestone achieved and overall progress toward completion of final plan. A monthly call with the Designated Authority Project Manager and the Grantee's assigned Account Manager or Back-Up Account Manager will be held.

Fees

A \$1000 fee is required at the time of application submission.

An application fee waiver may be requested at the time of application for proposals led by municipalities or municipal authorities, boards, commissions, or other municipal entities ranked in the top 10 percent of the 2020 Municipal Revitalization Index (MRI). Applicants will self-identify in the application as a municipality or municipal government entity requesting a waiver. Staff will determine if the entity meets the criteria for a waiver. Eligible entities will be granted a waiver for the program. Ineligible entities will be notified and a cure in the form of fees payment will be requested to complete the application.

Additional Information

Comprehensive information about the Asset Activation Grant Program is available at <https://www.njeda.com/asset-activation-planning-grant>

Questions concerning this Program and Notice of Funding Availability should be submitted NJAAP@njeda.gov.

The NJEDA 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.