

## Equitech RFA FAQ

### Application:

1. Can an applicant submit one application for workforce and one for infrastructure provided they are for separate projects?

*Yes, applicants are permitted to submit more than one application for workforce and/or infrastructure awards, as long as the applications are directed to distinct projects. Each application will be reviewed independently based on the criteria in the RFA.*

2. Can a proposed project service more than one county?

*Yes.*

3. How does TEDCO define diversity? What will be considered Inclusion?.

*TEDCO considers in its diversity and inclusion criteria:*

- *Whether the applicant's project has the potential to result in a positive economic development impact for a region or an area which is economically distressed or a rural area or a rural community; and/or*
- *Whether the founder of the applicant or a member of the applicant's executive leadership has self-identified themselves as socially and economically disadvantaged pursuant to 13 CFR 124.104 and 13CFR 124.103.*

4. Is this grant intended for multi-year funding? If so, what requirements apply for submitting follow-up funding requests?

*Infrastructure Projects funded through this RFA may have a project duration of 12-36 months and Workforce projects funded through this RFA may have a project duration of 12-24 months. Following-on funding requests will require submission of a new application. We anticipate annual award cycles through the Equitech Growth Fund.*

5. Would it be acceptable to complete the budget planning without a Letter of Commitment (LOC) for Year 2 and 3? The Budget planning follows a 3-year planning format, it may be challenging to secure matching funds for years 2 and 3

*We require a formal letter from the entity providing the **entire** matching funds required for the project. This letter of commitment should clearly state the amount committed, confirm that the funds are available, committed, and unencumbered, and specify that they are dedicated exclusively to the project for which you are applying.*

*While we do not provide a specific template, the LOC should generally include:*

- *The name of the organization providing the funds,*
- *The total amount committed,*
- *The payment schedule of the matching funds*
- *A statement confirming that the funds will be used for the Equitech Growth Fund project and are unencumbered, and*
- *A Signature from an authorized representative of the organization.*

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6. To whom should the Letter of Commitment and Letters of Support be addressed/directed to?
  - o Are Letters of Support to be submitted for each partner, or proposed partner referenced in the Project Proposal?

*Please address Letters of Commitment/Letters of Support to:*

*Equitech Growth Fund Program Manager  
TEDCO  
10960 Grantchester Way, Suite 120,  
Columbia, MD 21044*

*Letters of Commitment/Letters of Support should be attached to the project application on submission. Letters of Commitment must be submitted from each partner making a contribution towards the RFA match requirement. Letters of Support from other partners are not required but will be considered in an application review.*

7. Should other outstanding grant proposals related to the project in the EGF application be disclosed in an application submission?

*Applicants with a pending proposal for the same project under a different grant program may not apply for this program.*

8. When will successful grants be awarded/start?

*We anticipate making award announcements in early December 2024 and expect the funds to be deployed around January 2025, pending adoption of related regulations.*

9. What is the difference between a Letter of Support and a Letter of Commitment and what is required for each?

*Letters of Commitment for matching funds are required. Letters of Support are optional - these could include support from partners, community stakeholders, or other entities that demonstrate alignment with your project's goals.*

### **Allowable Uses/Eligibility:**

1. Where can I learn about eligibility for this grant?

*You can learn more about eligibility criteria by reviewing the Request for Applications (RFA) document [here](#), and also the program regulations, which are currently being adopted. A link for the regulations, once adopted, will be provided on the Equitech website.*

2. Can the Funds from the EFG grant be used to provide scholarships?

*No, scholarships are not considered an allowable use of funds for the EFG grant, as the focus is on infrastructure projects and workforce development programs.*

3. Could the applicant initially be out of state if the applicant agrees to use the funds within the state?

*Preference will be given to proposals that offer the greatest impact within the State of Maryland. However, the applicant must intend to have a physical presence in the state of Maryland for at least 5 years. Applicants must use the proceeds including the matching funds in the state.*

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4. As part of the workforce development goals outlined in the RFA, can awarded funds be used to increase salaries and/or transition part-time employees to full-time employees, etc.?

*No. Salary increases associated with transitioning part-time employees to full-time roles are not covered under the workforce development goals of this RFA. Instead, these funds are specifically intended to support activities such as training, upskilling, and reskilling, particularly in STEM fields and for underserved communities. The purpose of this funding is to create a more competitive and capable regional workforce through targeted skills development.*

5. Is lab build-out considered infrastructure?

*Yes. Preference will be given to build-outs that increase Maryland competitiveness and opportunities for businesses and job growth.*

6. Are "soft" infrastructure projects eligible for funding?

*Yes, "soft" infrastructure project proposals may be considered if they align with the goals outlined in the RFA. Projects focused on establishing or facilitating non-physical infrastructure, such as coalition-building activities or co-located entrepreneurial support organizations, could be eligible if they demonstrate clear benefits for workforce development, industry competitiveness, and regional economic growth. Proposals should clearly outline how these activities contribute to sustainable impact within the innovation ecosystem.*

7. Does TEDCO give preference to non-profit vs for-profit applicant or vice-versa?

*There is no preference given to the organizational structure of an applicant. Non-profit and for-profit organizations will be evaluated equally based on the merits and alignment of a proposal to the goals outlined in the RFA.*

8. Does the application prefer if the grant money leads to economic rights (e.g. warrants or ownership) to the businesses?

*No. The Equitech Growth Fund is not designed as an investment program.*

9. Which projects will get preference under the EGF?

*Priority is given to projects that address both social impact and expanding Maryland's innovation competitiveness.*

10. Does TEDCO have specific resources or programs it recommends as part of the workforce Development?

*Please refer to the RFA, the Commission's Preliminary goals and the Equitech Growth Fund DRAFT regulations.*

11. Can funds be used for developing AI technology or novel SaaS platforms?

*Yes, if the project demonstrates advancement of the goals outlined in the RFA through an infrastructure or workforce development initiative those costs would be eligible.*

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### Matching funds:

1. Does a loan or investment qualify as matching funds?  
*Yes, loan and investments will qualify as matching funds.*
2. Can SBIR Funding or other sources of Federal Funding be used for matching Funds?  
*Yes. Federal funds can be used as a match as long as the funds are awarded, committed and unencumbered. A letter of commitment can be provided by the awardee of the federal funds. Additional documentation may be requested as needed.*
3. Are state funds allowed to be used for the matching funds requirement?  
*Yes, state funds can be used as matching funds. Matching funds must be unencumbered and specific to the project being proposed for the Equitech Growth Fund. While state funds are not explicitly excluded, they must be allocated solely for this project and accompanied by a Letter of Commitment verifying that they are committed for this purpose.*
4. Can funding through local government be a permissible match?  
*Yes, funds from local government sources can be used as a match, provided they meet the criteria of being unencumbered and project specific. As with other matching funds, an LOC is required to confirm that these funds are available exclusively for the proposed project.*
5. If federal funds are being used as a match for another state program, can they also be used as a match for the Equitech RFA?  
*No, matching funds for the Equitech Growth Fund must be unencumbered and dedicated solely to the proposed project.*
6. Can a higher education institution use the institution's non-state and/or state appropriated funds as a match for the RFA?  
*Yes, state and/or non-state funds are eligible to fulfill match requirements outlined in the updated RFA.*
7. Could matching cash funds (partially or entirely) come from the applicant's founders/owners?  
*Yes.*
8. Could matching funds be in-kind (non-cash)?  
*No. In-kind contributions will be considered, but projects will require a cash match to fulfill the match requirements.*
9. Could TEDCO investments/grants be used as matching funds for the Equitech RFP?  
*TEDCO investments are not eligible to be used as matching funds for EGF applications.*
10. Does the 1:1 match have to be committed prior to 11/6/2024?  
*Applicants must provide a Letter of Commitment in their application as verification that the necessary, preferred matching funds have been secured and that these funds will be made available for the intended purposes.*

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11. Can the matching funds come from multiple sources?

*Yes.*

12. If an organization is partnering with an educational institution to provide a resource for students to get hands-on experience as a part of their curriculum, could tuition paid by students for the course be counted towards the 1:1 match requirement?

*No. The preferred 1:1 match cannot leverage revenues from the proposed project.*

13. Are internal R&D funds an allowable match?

*Yes, if the funds are unencumbered and specific to the workforce or infrastructure project being proposed and aligned with the program goals outlined in the RFA.*