**United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey**

Request for Proposals

Equitable Entrepreneurship Assessment and Strategy

October 2019

**Summary**

United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey (UWGPSNJ), in partnership with the City of Philadelphia (City) and the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) is embarking upon a comprehensive analysis of the entrepreneurial landscape in Philadelphia, with a specific focus on the ecosystem of resources for diverse business owners, including people of color, immigrants, and women.

UWGPSNJ, the City, and PIDC are committed to creating and supporting an environment where diverse business owners can form and grow their business successfully. Research indicates that diverse business owners are underrepresented in Philadelphia in comparison to their population, with African Americans having a notably low rate of representation of new entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs are also forming businesses at a lower-than-expected rate given their share of the population. And although immigrant entrepreneurs are responsible for helping to drive a significant amount of new businesses, they also face financing barriers that impact their growth rates.

Research reveals that disparities in rates of business formation and growth are due to structural barriers. Diverse entrepreneurs generally do not have the same type of access to the necessary requirements to launch and grow successfully, which include access to capital, business and financial management education, and market opportunity (e.g., contracts and networks). This lack of access can be traced to historical structural barriers and continued market prejudices that make it more difficult for diverse entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses.

Addressing gender and racial equity in the local entrepreneurship community is a priority for UWGPSNJ and its partners. Through this proposal, UWGPSNJ will engage a consultant to conduct a needs assessment to better identify and understand the available resources within the entrepreneurial landscape and the critical gaps in those resources, with a focus on diverse entrepreneurs, and a strong and efficient continuum of resources for entrepreneurs at different stages of business growth. Based on the assessment, the consultant will propose recommendations for a program design and an investment strategy to support UWGPSNJ, the City, and PIDC’s efforts to create an equitable entrepreneurship ecosystem and ensure the provision of a more comprehensive set of targeted services necessary to increase the growth of diverse firms.

**Background**

The City’s Department of Commerce has laid the groundwork for this initiative by convening the partners as follows:

* There are quarterly meetings of 60+ technical assistance providers and an online business resource finder is in development.
* 40+ organizations that provide financing through loans and grants to businesses are members of the Philadelphia Business Lending Network, a group that meets quarterly.

The member lists with organization name, address contact information, and services offered will be provided to the consultant. Members have expressed interest and agreement in undertaking this assessment and strategy and are therefore expected to be available to the consultant. The consultant will have access to the group meetings as well.

Following are some of the recent efforts that have been undertaken to engage and understand our small business market and how we compare to other places. This work is aimed at identifying our potential for growth and what the impact would be on Philadelphia’s economy if we change our current trajectory.

* PIDC did a recent survey on small business financing needs in Philadelphia.
* Pew is undertaking a ‘state of Philadelphia small and mid-sized business’ research initiative to be published in 2020.
* An entrepreneurship listening session, focused on racial equity, was held in June 2019 and the notes will be made available to the consultant team.

**Scope of Services**

UWGPSNJ is seeking an experienced consultant to deliver a culminating document setting forth detailed recommendations about the path forward including:

* Gaps in services
* Opportunities to be leveraged
* Strategies to increase coordination across providers of supports
* Increasing access to existing supports
* Ensuring supports across the life cycle of entrepreneurship
* Long-term strategic priorities

The process should include, but not be limited to:

* Review the national best practices of local (neighborhood, city, or regional) entrepreneurship strategies to assess effective models, critical partners, impacts on businesses and job creation, and opportunities for learning and replication in Philadelphia, with a focus on models that help entrepreneurs of color, women, and immigrants, among other diverse entrepreneurs, achieve higher rates of success;
* Assess the resources currently supporting entrepreneurs in Philadelphia and provide a set of recommendations on organizational capacity, effectiveness, collaborations, gaps, and opportunities for deeper investment to provide support to high potential, lower resourced opportunities, with a focus on the extent to which specific resources are being provided to diverse entrepreneurs and businesses at different stages of growth;
* Engage and compile feedback from entrepreneurs of color, immigrants and women regarding needs, gaps in services, and experience with available resources;
* Facilitate a program design process alongside UWGPSNJ, the City, PIDC and selected partners to provide comprehensive resources for Philadelphia entrepreneurs, with an emphasis on increasing the formation and sustainable growth of diverse entrepreneurs; providing and promoting an efficient and effective continuum of resources for businesses at different stages of growth; and leveraging local market opportunities, and recommendations on where public funding is needed to incentivize supports and services.

**Primary Activities and Timeline**

*Phase One: National Research and Review (January – March 2020)*

* Utilize an equity lens to review models for collaborative, regionwide entrepreneurship strategies across the country and report on promising practices, replicable models, and lesson learned
* Identify key considerations, challenges, composition of partners and funders / lenders.
* Key Deliverables:
* Best practices analysis and case studies of models for investing in a collaborative approach to equitable entrepreneurship
* Report on ingredients of successful models and profiles of key partners
* Identify key performance indicators, metrics and outcomes utilized to measure success of support organizations

*Phase Two: Local Landscape and Needs Analysis and Recommendations (March 2020 – June 2020)*

* Comprehensively review Philadelphia’s local entrepreneurial landscape, including support organizations, lenders, TA providers, and philanthropic funders to provide a comprehensive view of the Philadelphia landscape, with a focus on the extent to which organizations are differentiating services based on the stage of business growth and providing targeted services based on the needs of diverse entrepreneurs
* Interview key stakeholders, across diverse communities, to provide clear sense of community needs and capacity and understanding of how such needs and capacity may be situated differently based on specific community feedback
* Focus groups and individual interviews with businesses representing diverse industries, stages, sizes, and owner demographics.
* Key Deliverables
* Capacity map with recommendations on the strongest providers and potential partners to lead a regionwide collaboration
* Needs and gap analysis of key areas of need with recommendations on organizations to build capacity and/or identify new resources to address these gaps
* Present opportunities within existing and emerging growth sectors with a priority focus on businesses owned by women, immigrants, and entrepreneurs of color

*Phase Three: Facilitated Program Design Phase (June 2020 – Nov 2020)*

* Plan and lead convenings with selected diverse local and national stakeholders to gain input and insight for Philadelphia model. If needed, United Way will cover potential travel costs of any national stakeholders.
* Collaborate with diverse stakeholders to design a continuum of supports for entrepreneurs, covering the full lifecycle of business growth and incorporating evidence-based equitable strategies to support diverse entrepreneurs
* Consolidate learnings into recommendations for program design and investment strategy
* Work with a Steering Committee (including UWGPSNJ, City, PIDC, and other stakeholders) to develop and articulate program design
* Key Deliverables
* 5-10 working sessions with selected partners and stakeholders
* Interim report on learnings and recommendations
* Final strategy document articulating program design

**Key Qualifications**

* Experience working with cities and regions on entrepreneurship initiatives
* Clear understanding of the needs of entrepreneurs at all stages of business growth
* Knowledge of a racial equity lens and deep cultural competency and experiencing working with entrepreneurs of color, immigrants, women, and under-represented business leaders
* A knowledge and understanding of the Philadelphia market - though applicants need not be based in Philadelphia
* Successful applicants would include a diverse team

**Proposal Structure**

Please include the following in your response:

* Statement of qualifications and experience of team
* Samples of similar projects
* Proposed activities, deliverables, and timeline
* Proposed budget, including recommendations for subgrants to program design partners

**Deadlines and contacts**

Please deliver proposal by 5 p.m. on November 18, 2019 to Michael Banks (mbanks@uwgpsnj.org). Please contact Michael Banks with any questions of clarifications.

**About the Partners**

United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey, serving communities in Pennsylvania’s Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties, and New Jersey’s Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May and Cumberland counties, is part of a national network of more than 1,300 locally governed organizations that work to create lasting positive changes in communities and in people’s lives. United Way fights for the health, education and financial stability of every person in every community. In Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey, United Way fights for youth success and family stability because we LIVE UNITED against intergenerational poverty. For more information about United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey visit www.UnitedForImpact.or

The mission of the Department of Commerce is to ensure that Philadelphia is a globally competitive city to which employers flock, entrepreneurs thrive and innovation abounds; to recruit and retain a diverse set of businesses; to foster economic opportunities for all Philadelphians in all neighborhoods; and to partner with workforce development programs and local businesses on talent development ensuring that all Philadelphians can find and retain living-wage jobs.

For more information about the Department of Commerce, visit [phila.gov/commerce](https://www.phila.gov/departments/department-of-commerce/).

PIDC is Philadelphia’s public-private economic development corporation. A non-profit founded in 1958 by the City of Philadelphia and the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, PIDC’s mission is to spur investment, support business growth, and foster developments that create jobs, revitalize neighborhoods, and drive growth to every corner of Philadelphia. PIDC has invested more than $16.6 billion of financing and more than 3,200 acres of land sales—which has leveraged over $29 billion in total investment and assisted in retaining and creating hundreds of thousands of jobs in Philadelphia. In the last five years, PIDC has borrowed more than $60 million of capital from private investors and raised more than $10 million in new equity investments that have helped fund more than $142 million in 480 business loans to growing companies located in 96% of the city’s zip codes and more than half of PIDC clients are minority- or woman-owned businesses.

For more information about PIDC, visit [www.PIDCphila.com](http://cts.businesswire.com/ct/CT?id=smartlink&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.PIDCphila.com&esheet=51176964&newsitemid=20150909006708&lan=en-US&anchor=www.PIDCphila.com&index=4&md5=187b6920f9257ec671049aa02dfe506f) and follow us @PIDCphila on Twitter.