

ENGAGE!

Program Guidelines | March 2019



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Section I – General

A. Statement of Purpose

Engage! is a Pennsylvania statewide business retention and expansion (BRE) program designed to regularly and proactively interact with targeted companies. The overall goal of *Engage!* is to retain existing businesses in a community and to help them grow and expand by building solid relationships with business owners or key decision makers and economic and workforce development partners and their representatives.

Engage! is intended to regularly interact with companies for purposes of:

- Identifying needs and matching resources to help existing businesses and industries address their challenges to become more competitive and successful.
- Demonstrating to local businesses and industries that the community recognizes and depends on their contributions to the local/state economy.
- Building business and community capacity to sustain growth and development.
- Understanding and addressing the common themes articulated by PA businesses in order to drive policy and the menu of the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and partner services for long range business retention and expansion efforts.

B. Mission and Focus

Engage! provides grants for purposes of a systematic BRE program to assist in the identification and targeting of PA companies; the engagement of those companies through various outreach methods; assessment of the needs of those targeted companies; and assisting those targeted companies through referrals and direct technical assistance.

Engage! is built on one-on-one, in-person contact with business leaders to assess their needs and provide appropriate follow-up assistance. Business outreach is to be conducted by experienced individuals capable of developing business relationships with corporate-level business leaders. While one-on-one visits with companies are the mainstay of *Engage!*, outreach includes additional forms of contact with corporate-level individuals and decision makers via forums/convenings, focus groups, business walks, and trainings/workshops to accomplish the overall program goals. *Engage!* is implemented and delivered by a robust network of state, regional and local partners.

C. Available Funding

DCED will allocate regional funding following a competitive process.

Section II – Program Grants

A. Eligible Applicants

1. DCED will accept grant proposals from the following:
 - a. Nonprofit organizations incorporated under the laws of the commonwealth.
 - b. Local governments, including, but not limited to, counties, cities, boroughs, townships, and home rule municipalities.
 - c. Municipal and redevelopment authorities and agencies.
 - d. Industrial development authorities and agencies.
2. For-profit entities are not eligible to apply to this program.

B. Eligible Uses of Funds

1. Funding is provided to eligible applicants for the ultimate goal of serving businesses in good standing with the Pennsylvania Department of State. Eligible costs are based upon those necessary to deliver a coordinated business outreach program and the necessary follow-up assistance, including:
 - a. Reasonable salary and other personnel expenses (including independent contractors), travel, administrative, equipment, supplies, and other expenses associated with the delivery of *Engage!* services. Any employee charging time to this grant as salary and other personnel expenses must maintain adequate payroll records documenting such activities.
 - b. Costs associated with service delivery integration which may include strategic planning, coordinated marketing and outreach plans, shared services, administrative functions, information technology solutions, co-location expenses, etc.
 - c. Contracted professional services directly related to the implementation of the activities set forth in the proposal. (NOTE: Selection of subcontractors must be done in an open and competitive manner in accordance with bidding requirements set forth in the grant contract.)
 - d. Sustaining existing programs as well as developing new and creative initiatives to meet the evolving needs of the business community. Services should include comprehensive technical assistance to key business sectors based upon the business information available for the local region.
 - e. Costs associated with research and preparation for company outreach.
 - f. Preparation and publishing costs for educational and outreach materials, including expenses associated with the dissemination of such materials.
 - g. Other expenses deemed eligible by DCED.
2. Ineligible uses of funds include, but are not limited to, funds used to support indirect costs, alcohol, and entertainment.
3. All expenditures must be supported with documentation.

C. Distribution of Funds

1. *Engage!* does not prescribe or mandate a funding formula.
2. Applicants are encouraged to collaborate with local, regional and state business service providers in implementing *Engage!* activities. Examples include but are not limited to: Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance (PREP), Industrial Resource Centers, Workforce Development Boards, Ben Franklin Technology Partners (BFTPs).
3. When developing proposals and budget requests, applicants should take into consideration:
 - a. Appropriate staffing levels and qualifications
 - b. Business needs and regional priorities
 - c. Coordination with workforce development partners
 - d. Program impacts
 - e. Total fiscal year *Engage!* appropriation
 - f. Availability and leveraging of other public and private resources

D. Grant Limitations

1. Work plans must cover a 12-month period of performance.
2. Funds may not be used to procure lobbying services or pay fines or costs resulting from lawsuits, citations, or regulatory actions.
3. Atypical fringe benefits (ex. gym and warehouse memberships) are not eligible expenses. All fringe benefit categories must be detailed in the budget notes, i.e. health/life insurance benefits, paid leave, retirement plans, etc.
4. Funds allocated for memberships, dues, conferences and subscriptions must reflect a direct connection to *Engage!* services or professional development. Requests for approval or reimbursement of costs associated with resources not directly benefitting *Engage!* clients or staff will not be granted.
5. ExecutivePulse is the only Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system eligible to be supported with *Engage!* funding.

E. Impact Measures

1. Each proposal will forecast, track and report the following minimum program metrics which will also be directly recorded in the ExecutivePulse CRM. Work plans should address the program metrics used to measure the success of the business outreach.
2. Each proposal will project impact measures for the delivery of *Engage!* services. Minimum program metrics to be tracked and reported to DCED are listed below:
 - a. # of *Engage!* surveys completed
 - b. # of referrals to partners
 - c. # of focus groups/business walks
 - d. # of company action plans developed
 - e. # of company action plans accepted for implementation

3. Successful applicants must use the ExecutivePulse CRM system to record and track all business and partner activity (surveys, action plans, action items, journal entries, counseling sessions, metrics, etc.). An *Engage!* survey is provided within ExecutivePulse to be used as part of this program. Access to ExecutivePulse will be provided to successful applicants and training will be provided as necessary. All data must be entered directly into ExecutivePulse within ten (10) working days of the *Engage!* visit.
4. Outcomes are expected to be measured and reported quarterly based on the reporting schedule which will be provided by DCED.

F. Application Procedures

1. Applicants seeking *Engage!* funding will be evaluated through a competitive review process conducted by DCED.
2. Approval for all projects and project changes rests with DCED. All activities must be in compliance with DCED policies, contracts, and guidelines.
3. Eligible applicants will submit one electronic version of the proposal and budget describing the activities to be accomplished in the proposed 12-month period of performance. All proposals are to be in either Microsoft Word format, or PDF format. Proposals are limited to 10 pages, double spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point. Cover page and appendices are not included in the 10-page limit. Proposals, at a minimum, will include the following format and information:
 - a. Cover Page
 - b. Date submitted
 - c. Applicant Tax ID#
 - d. Key organizational contact(s)
 - e. Full mailing address, telephone number
 - f. Email address of responsible contact(s)
 - g. Name of applicant that will serve as the lead agency for the *Engage!* program (letters of support may be included from county, or other organizations as an appendix)
 - h. Amount requested (total) for the period of performance
 - i. Signatures (authorized organization official)
 - j. Identify all individual(s) who will conduct *Engage!* visits. For those individuals identified by name, provide a resume and relevant background or experience. If the individual is unknown, provide a detailed job description and the preferred method for filling the position(s), i.e. independent contract or direct hire.
 - k. Define the proposed geographical region.
 - l. Include an explanation of, and rationale for, the companies to be targeted.
 - m. Define current business support resources that will be made available as part of the technical assistance in the area to be covered.
 - n. Include performance metrics for the project (See Section E #2).
4. Proposals should be specific and detail how services will be delivered to businesses including who will be performing the outreach and how the outreach will take place.

5. Proposals should discuss how *Engage!* funding will assist in accomplishing forecasted goals, including company identification, the process for company contact, and company needs assessments and referrals.
6. Proposals should describe the process for developing and presenting company action plans designed to help retain and expand Pennsylvania businesses.
7. Proposals should provide a demonstrated coordination with workforce development partners.
8. The proposal should identify the partner organizations receiving *Engage!* funds.
9. Appendices
 - a. Appendix A. Budget and Budget Narrative
 - i. The budget narrative must describe and discuss each budget line item over the entire project period reflecting all *Engage!* requested funds along with any leveraged funds allocated to the project. Budget line-items should include salary/personnel, fringe benefits, consultant/professional services, travel, meeting materials, equipment, communications, and any other costs deemed necessary to the success of the project.
 - ii. Matching funds are not required as part of the application, however, as part of the budget submission for the proposal, applicants should indicate any federal, state, local government, academic or private funds that will be used to accomplish the activities proposed.
 - b. Appendix B. Project Support Letters
 - i. Letters pledging support to the proposed project are optional and, if included with the proposal, should be one page each describing the specific support to be provided. Letters of approval and support may be from local government, county government, economic development organizations, etc., where applicable. Letters shall only be included in the Appendix, not mailed separately.
10. Applications for *Engage!* funding are due May 1, 2019 by 5pm.

G. Evaluation Criteria

1. DCED will evaluate all work plans in accordance with the following criteria:
 - a. Does the applicant adequately identify and describe who will perform *Engage!* outreach and that the individual(s) has the necessary capacity and experience?
 - b. Does the work plan clearly demonstrate commitment to the highest standard of customer service and excellence?
 - c. Does the applicant adequately understand and describe the process to visit companies and develop appropriate action plans?
 - d. Does the applicant adequately understand and describe the process to assess and assist companies?
 - e. Does the applicant forecast metrics to adequately measure the results of this program?
 - f. Does the work plan reflect an effort to address regional opportunities and needs, including efforts to coordinate with workforce development partners?
 - g. Does the project budget clearly and accurately align with *Engage!* program implementation and are the costs allowable, reasonable, and eligible?

2. Proposals must demonstrate a clear understanding of, and commitment to *Engage!*. Innovative processes and models are strongly encouraged.
3. DCED reserves the right to ask applicants to revise applications prior to being asked to submit a DCED Electronic Single Application.

H. Procedures for Accessing Funds

1. Upon approval of a proposal by DCED, an invitation letter will be issued to the applicant with instructions on how to submit an Electronic Single Application.
2. Contracts will be issued to appropriate grantees.
3. Following the full execution of a grant agreement, funds will be disbursed to grantees based on the approved budget and submission of invoices. Documentation supporting all costs must be maintained and submitted when requested by DCED.
4. Budget revisions must be submitted no later than May 15, 2020.

I. Project Close-Out and Reports

1. Each successful applicant will maintain complete and accurate records and client files that demonstrate and document the services detailed in the proposal.
2. DCED staff reserves the right to ask for additional documents for contracts.
3. DCED will provide a standardized template to be used by each grantee to report program and process impacts.
4. Reports shall be submitted via email on a quarterly basis no later than 15 calendar days after the end of each quarter (e.g. October 15 for period July-September; January 15 for period October-December; April 15 for period January-March; July 15 for period April-June).
5. No program audit is required for this grant.

Section III – Miscellaneous Program Requirements

A. Nondiscrimination

1. No assistance shall be awarded to an applicant under this program unless the applicant certifies that the applicant shall not discriminate against any employee or against any person seeking employment by reason of race, gender, creed, color, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or in violation of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, age, sex, national origin, handicap or disability, or in violation of any applicable federal laws. All contracts for work to be paid with grant funds must contain the commonwealth's official nondiscrimination clause.

B. Conflict of Interest

1. An officer, director, or employee of an applicant who is a party to or has a private interest in a project shall disclose the nature and extent of the interest to the governing body of the applicant, and may not vote on action of the applicant concerning the project, nor participate in the deliberations of the applicant concerning the project.

C. Project Records

1. The applicant must maintain full and accurate records with respect to the project and must ensure adequate control over related parties in the project. The program office requires access to such records, as well as the ability to inspect all work, invoices, materials, and other relevant records at reasonable times and places. Upon request of the program office, the applicant must furnish all data, reports, contracts, documents, and other information relevant to the project.

Section IV – Contact Information

Program inquiries, work plans and budgets should be submitted electronically to:

PA Department of Community and Economic Development
Center for Strategic Partnerships
ATTN: Jennifer Lench
Engage! Program
Commonwealth Keystone Building
400 North Street, 4th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0225

Telephone: (717) 720-7345
Email: jlensch@pa.gov

Appendix I – Budget Format

Please use the following format for budget data to be submitted as Appendix A of the proposals.

Section I. Comprehensive Budget

BUDGET CATEGORY	APPROVED BUDGET AMOUNT
Salaries	
Fringes	
Contractual	
Travel	
Supplies	
Equipment	
Other*	
Total	\$

**If this category is used, the grantee must explain what “other” costs are.*

Section II. Budget Narrative

A brief description of each budget line item should be provided. Under the personnel line item, a list of each key employee supported by *Engage!* funding is required with a notation of the annual salary, amount and percentage of salary being supported by *Engage!*

For the contractual line item, a description of each contractual item should be included. For any contract of \$10,000 or more, a list of deliverables is required.

All costs must be direct.

DCED may request additional documentation related to proposed expenses in order to sufficiently review and determine reasonableness of costs. All applicable organizations must be current with IRS Form 990 (Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax) and other pertinent filings as directed by state and federal statutes.