



**STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**

**New Jersey DOC: Locally, Empowered, Accountable, and Determined (LEAD)
Reentry Initiative**

**Category C:
INNOVATIVE REENTRY COOPERATIVE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

**ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT
FINANCIAL LITERACY
VALUE INVESTMENT TRAINING
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT**

NOTICE OF GRANT OPPORTUNITY

- **Announcement Date:** Monday, May 5, 2025
- **Application Due Date:** Sunday, May 25, 2025, 5:00 pm

**Victoria L. Kuhn, Esq.
Commissioner**

INNOVATIVE REENTRY COOPERATIVE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

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INNOVATIVE REENTRY COOPERATIVE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Take Notice that in compliance with N.J.S.A. 52:14-34.4 et seq. (P.L. 1987, c.7), the Department of Corrections hereby publishes a notice of the availability of the following grant:

A. Information for Bidders (Background)

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, in 2021, the US criminal justice system held almost 1.2 million people in state prisons.¹ A recent analysis of the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) inmate census revealed that NJDOC currently houses approximately 12,000 inmates.² About 59% of all state correctional institution offenders were Black.³ Further analysis revealed that six counties alone — Essex, Camden, Passaic, Atlantic, Middlesex, Union, and Hudson — comprise more than half (62%) of the total NJDOC commitments.⁴ However, many citizens fail to realize that incarceration is not a permanent circumstance for most imprisoned persons. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, at least 95% of all State prisoners will be released at some point, with approximately 80% being released to parole supervision.⁵

Finding steady and gainful employment after release from prison can be difficult. A lack of support and career training can contribute to unsuccessful community reintegration. Organizations working with people returning to the community must provide unlimited opportunities to achieve economic independence and self-sufficiency by leveraging economic empowerment as a path to success. To achieve success, the NJDOC seeks to establish community partners that can provide a broad spectrum of entrepreneurial development, financial literacy, value investment, and real estate investment training to empower returning citizens to continue the path of prosocial and law-abiding behavior, which will aid the NJDOC in leading the nation in combating recidivism.

The NJDOC does not embrace a one-size-fits-all solution to reentry service provision. To that end, the NJDOC recognizes that reintegration is most successful when communities and corrections come together to share a collective goal, honor the mutual interest of methodologies

¹ https://bjs.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh236/files/media/document/p21st_sumB.pdf

² https://www.nj.gov/corrections/pdf/offender_statistics/2024/Total_2024.pdf

³ https://www.state.nj.us/corrections/pdf/offender_statistics/2024/By%20Race_Ethnicity%202023.pdf

⁴ https://www.state.nj.us/corrections/pdf/offender_statistics/2024/By%20County%20of%20Commitment%202023.pdf

⁵ BJA <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/reentry.pdf>

for addressing public safety, affirming their bond, and acknowledging and supporting urban communities' ability to succeed when given fair access to resources. The goal is a cooperative partnership for successful reentry service delivery. Our mission is to deliver services at the local level, empowered by communities that develop the necessary resources, a willingness to hold community-based agencies accountable for advertised services, and forward-thinking strategies for determining service integration models.

To achieve this goal, the NJDOC created the NJLEAD initiative. NJLEAD stands for Locally Empowered, Accountable, and Determined. NJLEAD aims to establish a collaborative effort to ensure a continuum of care and treatment from prison to the community. An effective reintegration process is collaborative and most successful when returning citizens understand their right to self-determination and are empowered to choose service providers who offer resources that meet their unique needs. As a result, urban communities with a consortium consisting of a broad spectrum of diverse service providers who have experienced working with those once involved in the carceral system provide an opportunity for successful reentry.

Designated government entities, for-profit, nonprofit community-based corporations, or associations will work in concert with the NJDOC, Division of Programs and Reintegration Services, the Office of Community Engagement and Reentry Initiatives (CERI), the Office of Educational Services (OES), the Office of Programming and Supportive Services (OPSS), and the Office of Community Programs (OCP). The goal is to ensure that the rehabilitative training implemented inside the correctional facility continues and expands immediately upon release to reduce the likelihood of high recidivism rates presently seen among the national statistics.

The NJDOC has received state funding through the Office of the Governor to support NJLEAD's innovative cooperative economic empowerment initiatives in urban communities and communities impacted by high incarceration rates in New Jersey. This funding is designed to promote various evidence-informed and effective reentry initiatives for those returning from prison. It also provides urban communities with the necessary resources to support and enhance the State of New Jersey's ongoing efforts to reduce recidivism.

B. Important Dates

- NGO release date: Monday, May 5, 2025
- End of question period: Wednesday, May 7, 2025
- All questions and answers posted on the NJDOC Website: Friday, May 9, 2025
- Proposal closing date: Sunday, May 25, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.
- Notification submitted to the Office of Community Affairs of sub-grant award: Friday, June 27, 2025.

C. Eligible Organizations

- State governments that provide specialized services for individuals who have experienced incarceration.
- County governments that provide specialized services for individuals who have experienced incarceration.
- Nonprofits that have 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education, and have proven experience working with individuals who have experienced incarceration.
- Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- For-profit organizations
- Private institutions of higher education
- Public institutions of higher education
- Small businesses
- Other: Units of local government

The final amount will be determined based on the selection criteria.

D. Scope of Work

The NJDOC seeks proposals that specify how municipal, county, or state entities, for-profit or nonprofit community-based organizations, or associations will utilize funds to implement innovative economic empowerment initiatives that enhance and improve the ability of formerly incarcerated individuals or incarcerated individuals within 364 days of release to

achieve financial stability and independence. This service area may include, but is not limited to, municipal government entities, for-profit and nonprofit community-based organizations, or associations that utilize funds to support strategies and programs to enhance the employability of individuals reintegrating into the community. Strategies such as enhancing entrepreneurial development, including work-from-home ventures, digital and financial literacy training, financial investment, debt management, debt-free living, value investment training, real estate training, and other innovative cooperative economic empowerment opportunities will be considered.

Proposals may include supportive services such as civil legal assistance to address legal barriers to entrepreneurship, such as driver's license restoration, commercial driver's licenses (CDLs), expungement of criminal records, and barriers created by occupational licensing boards that prevent a formerly incarcerated person from becoming gainfully employed in an area in which they are trained and proficient. Additionally, proposals may include assistance in starting a business, such as providing reasonable support with appropriate interview attire and grooming, business cards, formal business coaching, financial planning, and follow-up. Proposals must explain how the organization will assist participants with the online submission of business proposals, virtual interviewing, and post-release support for launching a new business. Grantees will partner with the New Jersey Department of Corrections' (NJDOC) Providing Access to Community Employment (PACE) Unit to share information regarding the availability of training and employment opportunities in the community and to arrange pre-release, post-release business administration, and leadership training. Proposals need to meet the required standards to receive funding from the NJDOC.

The NJLEAD-funded project staff must have direct access to the agency's Director/CEO and attend all NJDOC monthly meetings and reentry events at the NJDOC correctional facilities and the Residential Community Reintegration Programs (RCRP's). The NJLEAD-funded project staff must also document all contacts with, and services provided to, participants and their immediate families and submit these documents in the grant-required monthly reporting format by the specified due dates.

Proposals are limited exclusively to Innovative Reentry Employment and Entrepreneurial Initiatives that provide pre- and post-release assistance, employment, and entrepreneurial-related expenses. Proposals **shall not** be directed towards:

- Staff training and conferences
- Staff tuition reimbursement or educational incentives

- Staff incentives
- Medical care or inpatient substance use treatment
- Testing for participant substance abuse
- Monitoring or surveillance
- Other services unrelated to the scope of the grant application
- Fringe for part-time employees
 - Fringe benefits for part-time employees may not be charged to the grant, nor can partial payment of fringe benefits for full-time personnel assigned part-time to grant operations. Fringe benefits should be based on actual known costs or an approved negotiated rate by GMU. If not based on an approved negotiated rate, list the composition of the fringe benefit package. Fringe benefits are for the personnel listed in the personnel section of the budget and for full-time personnel working solely on NJLEAD-ONLY, and 100% of their time must be devoted to the NJLEAD project.
 - Fringe benefits may include FICA, Social Security, and standard State payroll tax deductions (State withholding, Disability, Unemployment, and Workforce Dev.), and additional deductions per your initial approved Budget submission, such as your Health Benefits Package. Please note that 401K, Supplemental Life Insurance, Vacation Pay, Christmas/Vacation Club, Overtime, Comp. time, etc., are not permissible.

To receive consideration, proposals must clearly and concisely describe how the applicant will provide services that support cooperative economic empowerment training, aiding in a seamless transition and reintegration from prison to the community, thereby strengthening and improving each participant's ability to achieve financial security and independence, as well as the agency's capacity and competencies for implementing the proposed initiative. All service providers must utilize trauma-informed, holistic, and culturally sensitive approaches to reentry services. The Reentry Cooperative Economic Empowerment Liaison must have direct access to the agency's CEO/Director and attend all monthly NJDOC meetings and reentry events at the agency's correctional facilities and central office headquarters.

Proposals should address the organization's approach to reentry services, distinctive programming, and any service gaps that require attention. For the proposal requirements, refer to Section F, Application Format.

Priority Service Eligibility:

- Coordination of services for adult individuals recently released from a New Jersey state prison within the past seven (7) years and their children residing in New Jersey, or a member of their immediate family with whom they reside in the same household. Proof of family member eligibility is required.
 - Immediate Family Member is defined as a parent, legal guardian, partner in a civil union couple, spouse, domestic partner, stepparent, sibling, or adult child with whom the client resides, or a minor aged child. For the purpose of this grant, the immediate family member may also be defined as the person who served as the custodial person with whom the client was reared **and with whom the client currently resides.**
- Coordination of services for adult individuals recently released from a New Jersey county correctional facility within the past one (1) year.
- Adult individuals under NJ State Parole supervision may be eligible for supportive services under this initiative on a case-by-case basis.
- Individuals on probation are ineligible for services under this initiative.
- Residents of New Jersey returning to the state after serving a sentence in another jurisdiction may be eligible for services on a case-by-case basis. The grantee must consult with the NJLEAD office.

E. Availability of Funds

Funds will be available after the proposals are reviewed and approved. Multiple awards are available based on selection criteria, but only one award will be given per applicant per category.

Total funding amount available: \$1,000,000.00

Total number of awards: 4-10

Minimum award available: \$50,000

Maximum award available: \$250,000

Funding Cycle: July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026

Planning Period: June 1, 2025, to June 30, 2025 [1 month]

Implementation Period: July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026 [12 months]

Applicants must provide a budget and narrative specifying the requested NJLEAD program award amount. Funding cannot be utilized to supplant any existing services and positions.

Funding **shall not** be used for the following:

- Prizes/entertainment/trinkets
- Gift Cards
- Purchasing vehicles
- Food and beverages
- Other services not approved in advance by the NJDOC

Successful applicants will be awarded a 13-month grant, with service commencement following an initial 30-day startup planning period. All services must commence by July 1, 2025. The NJDOC has the sole discretion to award a one-year grant extension based on performance and funding availability. NJDOC may choose to fund applications submitted under this FY 2025 solicitation in future fiscal years, depending on, among other considerations, the merit of the application and the availability of appropriations. Awardees are funded utilizing a tiered funding disbursement algorithm.

TIERED FUNDING DISBURSEMENT

Bronze level: New and previous awardees deemed inconsistent with meeting programmatic and fiscal reporting requirements shall receive quarterly funding disbursements.

Silver level: Previous awardees who have served as NJLEAD partners for a minimum of 1 funding cycle and are deemed to have consistently met programmatic and fiscal reporting requirements shall receive bi-annual funding disbursements.

Gold level: Previous awardees having served as an NJLEAD partner for a minimum of 2 funding cycles and deemed to have consistently met programmatic and fiscal reporting requirements, shall receive an annual funding disbursement.

Compliance determination is based on the number of noncompliance correspondences sent.

Inconsistent is defined as receiving more than one noncompliance correspondence from NJDOC-CERI or GMU per reporting period.

Compliant is defined as receiving no more than one correspondence sent from NJDOC-CERI or GMU per reporting period.

F. Application Format

The applications shall be double-spaced, use a standard **12-point font (Times New Roman is preferred)** with **no less than 1-inch margins, and not exceed 10 pages**. The page maximum *excludes* the grant application title page, budget document, and table of organization. Pages should be numbered "1 of 10," "2 of 10," and so on. Section headers are required. **Submissions that exceed ten (10) pages or fail to follow the formatting guidelines will be disqualified.** The application shall describe the approach to accomplishing the tasks outlined in the scope of work.

G. Proposal Outline

Applicants must be clear and concise in presenting their proposal, ensuring agencies address the following:

Section I. APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

- Name of the organization, address of the agency/corporation, the agency's Data Universal Numbering System (D-U-N-S) number, and category applying for and amount (**COVER PAGE**)
- Introduction about the organization, including experience working with vulnerable populations.
- Organizational commitment to diversity and inclusiveness, with the ability to deliver culturally competent and sensitive services and a gender-responsive approach.
- Demonstrated need for the development of reentry services in the local community.
- Currently managed reentry economic empowerment programs, including client demographics and services that will be expanded and enhanced under this initiative.
- Disclosure of contracts with the State of New Jersey and County government agencies and private and federally funded reentry, rehabilitative, and social services programs.

- Include a description of the corporation or association's governance structure, including the table of organization, the Board of Directors, and the organization's administrative, management, and organizational capacity to enter a grant with the NJDOC. Indicate the total number of employees.
- State the proposed reporting structure for the Innovative Reentry Cooperative Economic Empowerment initiative.

Section II. PROGRAM APPROACH

- Program design and types of programs and services.
- Total number of returning citizens to be served.
- Describe the planned organizational structure of the initiative, including the management of the project and the plan for supervising staff.
- Agreements with businesses within your network that are experienced in hiring formerly incarcerated individuals or have expressed interest.
- Plan(s) for assisting participants with entrepreneurial ventures and career employment.
- Discuss existing or proposed partnerships with other entities.
- Plans to assist participants with post-release follow-up training support.
- Include any anticipated difficulties with the tasks as described by this NGO.
- Describe the method for managing outcome data and methodology for collecting and analyzing outcome data.

Section III. REPORTING

- Describe the proposed plan for fiscal and programmatic management:
 - Programmatic Management:
 - ❖ The programming agent is responsible for monthly programmatic reporting of the details of all programmatic services provided to individual participants.
 - Fiscal Management
 - ❖ The fiscal agent is responsible for fiscal reporting of the details of all fiscal expenditures and agency auditing protocols.

- ❖ Describe the accounting expertise and qualifications of the fiscal agent. Include their resume in your submission.
- ❖ Identify the agency's electronic accounting system. Grantees may include the cost of the electronic accounting system in their indirect costs in the application. However, the proposal's indirect cost shall not exceed 10% of the requested grant amount.

Section IV. BUDGET NARRATIVE

The project budget must include all anticipated expenditures on participant-related reintegration services. The budget narrative must convey the story behind the requested budget line items. All salaries requested in the budget must be proportionate to the time spent working directly on the NJLEAD-funded project and commensurate with the employee's experience and credentials. If the budget includes planned consultants or contracted services, please explain the consultants' existing relationship with the applicant. The budget may include the indirect cost of marketing materials, flyers, brochures, and video production of the initiative; however, the proposal's total indirect cost shall not exceed 10% of the total grant amount requested.

The budget **shall not** include the following costs:

- Mortgage costs
- Building Improvements
- Fringe benefits for part-time staff

Section V. BUDGET WORKSHEET AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS. [not counted in the 10-page limit]

The project budget worksheet provided by NJDOC must be included with your submission. Submission of alternative budget worksheets other than the provided NJDOC budget worksheet may disqualify your application.

Section VI. MISCELLANEOUS [not counted in the 10-page limit]

- Applicants must include one letter of support from key community stakeholders (excluding state correctional partners and state elected officials) that details the organization's character, ability, and commitment to collaborating with the applicant to promote the initiative's mission.
- If applicants are already an NJSTART vendor, they must provide copies of their

NJSTART vendor number, New Jersey Business Registration, and New Jersey Affirmative Action Certificate (if applicable), proof of 501c3 status, Certificate of Incorporation, most recent tax return, and Certified Audit Report with their application.

H. New Jersey Department of Treasury-NJSTART

The Division of Purchase and Property (DPP), within the Department of the Treasury, was created under N.J.S.A. 52:18A-3 and serves as the State's central procurement agency. It is responsible for ensuring that professional and ethical procurement procedures are followed and that the best-valued products and services are obtained in a timely and cost-effective manner, in accordance with State laws and regulations, to enable client agencies to meet their objectives. To that end, the New Jersey State of the Art Requisition Technology, known as NJSTART, was created.

If awarded, Applicants will be required to register and become NJSTART vendors. If an applicant is a current NJSTART vendor, they must update their profile to accept Automated Clearing House (ACH) payments.

Applicants who are already NJSTART vendors must include copies of their NJSTART vendor number, New Jersey Business Registration, and New Jersey Affirmative Action Certificate with their application.

All grantees and sub-contractors must agree to participate in the NJDOC grant database platform to submit all required grant fiscal documents.

All organizations and businesses should obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN) and not apply using a Social Security number.

I. Selection Criteria

Selection criteria will be based upon the following, and in this order of importance:

- Experience with teaching the scope of work area 40%
- Program service design 20%
- Fiscal prudence/budget review..... 15%

- Demonstration of Need..... 10%
- Method for collection and analysis of outcome data 10%
- Experience working with vulnerable populations 5%

Current NJLEAD-funded partners will receive priority consideration based on their exceptional programmatic and fiscal standing with NJDOC. These partners who have demonstrated their capabilities and competencies in implementing their projects will receive an additional 5 points to their overall score.

J. Audit Requirements

The audit of the agency must be in accordance with the applicable regulations (and their subsequent revisions) as follows:

- 1) Federal OMB Circular A-133 Revised, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Nonprofit Organizations.
- 2) U.S. Government Accountability Office, Government Auditing Standards.

The NJDOC may audit the grant agency's overall operations, compliance with specific grant provisions, and the operations of any subcontractors engaged by the subgrant agency at any time during the grant term.

Whether such audits are conducted during the subgrant term or not, a final financial and compliance audit of subgrant operations, including the relevant operations of any subcontractors, may be performed after subgrant termination or expiration. A subgrant agency is subject to audit up to five years after the termination or expiration of a subgrant. If any audit has been started, but not completed or resolved by the end of the five years, a subgrant agency remains subject to audit until it is completed and resolved.

The subgrant agency shall agree to ensure the timely and appropriate resolution of audit findings and recommendations.

K. Subgrant Award and Term

The subgrant shall be awarded with reasonable promptness by written notice to the responsible applicant whose proposal meets the above specifications and is most advantageous to the State, considering price and other relevant factors. NJDOC staff may request a site visit to

the applicant agency before awarding the subgrant.

Agency partnerships are permissible. However, only one agency may be the primary applicant and receive grant funding. The other agency would be a subcontractor to the lead applicant. Subcontractor agencies must provide fiscal documents and formalize all programming services. An NJLEAD-funded agency shall not outsource or subcontract with another NJLEAD agency or a non-NJLEAD agency to provide the required services for which they applied.

Upon notification of the grant award, municipalities must obtain the necessary local government resolutions to accept the award within 60 days of receiving the selection notification. Award distributions will be made quarterly based on the agency's programmatic and fiscal compliance.

L. Instructions for Submitting Questions

Questions regarding this NGO cannot be accepted via telephone. Questions must be emailed before the end of the question period to GMUNJLEAD@doc.nj.gov. All questions and answers will be posted on the NJDOC Website.

M. Mandatory Documents

The mandatory documents that must be submitted in response to the NGO are as follows.

- 1) Reentry Supportive Services– Title Page (Appendix)
- 2) NJLEAD Application Compliance Checklist (on webpage)
- 3) Proposal
 - a) Applicant organization
 - b) Program approach
 - c) Reporting
 - d) NJDOC-provided Budget Form (on webpage) and organizational budget narrative on letterhead
 - e) NJSTART vendor number, New Jersey Business Registration, proof of 501c3 status, Certificate of Incorporation, most recent tax return, Certified Audit Report, and New Jersey Affirmative Action Certificate (if applicable).
 - f) A resume of the fiscal agent
 - g) Recommendation letters (1)

N. Instructions for Submitting Applications and Submission Deadline

The NGO will be posted on NJDOC's website at:

<https://www.nj.gov/corrections/pages/grants.html>

The applicant must submit a **complete application**, including all required attachments. The responsibility for submitting on time rests with the applicant. The NJDOC must receive one completed application with all attachments by **5:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 25, 2025**, without exception. The NJDOC will not accept applications received after this deadline for funding consideration.

The application must be delivered via email

To: GMUNJLEAD@doc.nj.gov

The email submission subject line must indicate the “name of the agency- NJLEAD Category C Application.” The documents shall be in PDF format and sent in one email with two attachments: 1) the NJDOC required title page, 10-page proposal, and budget with narrative, and 2) all other supportive documents.

O. Panel Review and Award Process

The NJDOC will conduct an internal review of each grant application. A review panel will evaluate the applications in accordance with the selection criteria. The successful applicants will be notified of the subgrant award on or around Friday, June 13, 2025. Successful applicants must comply with the New Jersey Department of Treasury's business form requirements before receiving grant funds.

Notice of Grant Opportunity

**INNOVATIVE REENTRY COOPERATIVE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
NJLEAD CATEGORY C**

Appendix

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
INNOVATIVE REENTRY COOPERATIVE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

Innovative Reentry Cooperative Economic Empowerment		
<u>SECTION I:</u>		
TITLE OF NGO: INNOVATIVE REENTRY COOPERATIVE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT (CATEGORY C)		
DIVISION: Office of Compliance and Strategic Planning		
OFFICE: Grants Management Unit		
<u>SECTION II:</u>		
CONTACT NAME:		
APPLICANT AGENCY:		
ADDRESS:		
CITY:	STATE:	ZIP:
PREVIOUS FUNDING: The Agency received funding from the New Jersey Department of Corrections within the last two years preceding the submission of this application. YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		
PROJECT DIRECTOR:		
TELEPHONE NUMBER:	E-MAIL:	
FISCAL MANAGER:		
TELEPHONE NUMBER:	E-MAIL:	
TOTAL AMOUNT OF FUNDS REQUESTED: \$ _____		
APPLICATION CERTIFICATION: <i>To the best of my knowledge and belief, the information provided in this application is accurate and true. The governing body of this agency has duly authorized the document, and we will comply with the attached assurances if funding is awarded.</i>		
SIGNATURE OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER/ AUTHORIZING OFFICIAL	TITLE	DATE
_____ (Please print or type name)		
<u>*FAILURE TO INCLUDE A REQUIRED APPLICATION COMPONENT CONSTITUTES A VIOLATION AND WILL RESULT IN THE APPLICATION BEING ELIMINATED FROM CONSIDERATION.</u>		
<u>SECTION III:</u>		
SEND PROPOSALS TO: <u>GMUNJLEAD@doc.nj.gov.</u>		APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 5:00 pm on May 25, 2025
<u>NO FACSIMILE SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED.</u>		