

Seed Vision-Setting and Technical Training Session

4/27/2023, 11am - 12pm MT

Public Webinar via Zoom

11:03am -- Mr. Tyler Jaeckel, Managing Director for Economic Recovery at the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade welcomed the Seed Subgroup of the Selection Committee (“Committee”) to the session. Mr. George Vinton, Chief Executive Officer, Common Group provided opening remarks to Committee members, Common Group staff, and OEDIT staff who all introduced themselves. Mr. Vinton noted that two Committee members, Mr. Josh Scott and Ms. Leslie Hylton-Hinga could not join the meeting.

11:07am -- Mr. Vinton reviewed the meeting agenda and provided an overview of Opportunity Now. Ms. Barbara Myrick, President, B&M Construction asked if K-12 might include grassroots efforts. Mr. Jaeckel said we aren’t seeing much focus on early childhood and seeing it more on high school students being connected to career pathways. He explained that there are some job pathways to K-12 jobs, but that the programs themselves are targeting high school students more than younger students since the program focus is on job placements. Ms. Myrick mentioned that a discussion on poverty statistics should involve a focus on younger students, and it’s a commonly missed piece that should be focused on more. Mr. John Ikard, Chairman, 1stbank agreed with Ms. Myrick’s statement and the importance of teaching basics to younger learners. Mr. Vinton agreed to the importance of this point as a principle, and that how it shows up in this program is through the provision of high-quality teacher education. He explained that we are limited to scope by the statute, but that there is a desire and processes to intersect with other funding streams to influence and address these other objectives.

11:15am – Mr. Vinton reviewed the program goals. Ms. Myrick asked how they will assess whether the populations served are broad and representative while reviewing proposals. Mr. Vinton explained that this responsibility was given to the program team to look at program participants served, and that on the back end grantees will be expected to report on the characteristics of populations served as well. Mr. Ikard commented on the importance of brushing up on the statute, and Mr. Vinton clarified that the program design was in response to the parameters laid out in the statute, and that we appreciate the push to consider what’s out of scope.

11:21am – Mr. Vinton reviewed the differences between the Seed grant track and the Scale grant track, and key characteristics to look for when reviewing Seed applications including innovative models and a wide range of industries served. Ms. Myrick asked if vocational training would fall into this category, and Mr. Vinton said it could. Mr. Jaeckel replied that reviewers might see known models like vocational training with additional pieces that could make it more effective, serve a new region in the state, or help to diversify an industry. Mr. Ikard asked if reviewers would see projects in place without a substantive track record. Mr. Vinton said that while track record is considered, the expectation is not that they’ve already operated in the state of Colorado and served Coloradans and that there will be a range of models. Mr. Jaeckel added

that for Scale grantees there is a bit of a risk tolerance, but for Seed grantees it can be an untested model we're getting off the ground. Mr. Jaeckel reiterated that the bill is meant to focus on regional talent needs and thus reviewers should look for partnerships that could spur solutions and more collaboration across the state moving forward.

11:28am – Mr. Vinton reviewed the evaluation process for RFAs and how the process will funnel into a limited set of recommendations for award.

11:31am – Mr. Vinton reviewed the Selection Committee review criteria for Seed applications. Mr. Myrick asked what happens if a project exceeds the 2 - 3 year grant period and what future funding opportunities might be. Mr. Vinton explained that because these are ARPA funds, there is an obligation date of December 2024 and a spend-down date of December 2026 for these funds. He stated that for the Seed track, we're hopeful they will make progress in the first year in order to come back to additional funding and that is an intention of the program design. He talked about the deep engagement with Colorado's philanthropic community to share success stories and barriers to continue supporting programs beyond the boundaries of Opportunity Now. Mr. Ikard asked for confirmation on the recommendation and selection process and who assigns the budget allocations, and Mr. Jaeckel responded that Committee members can make recommendations and that final budget allocations are made through the contracting phase with grantees. Mr. Ikard asked if proposals will come with dollar requests, and Mr. Jaeckel confirmed that they will. Mr. Vinton explained that there is a roughly \$10 million target pool for all Seed grants as part of Phase 1 and that recommendations should collectively fall near that cap.

11:39am – Mr. Vinton reviewed the process for Committee members to provide scores and that there is a significant scoring difference between Strongly Agree (+2) and Strongly Disagree (-2). He explained the notion of Committee members conducting a portfolio review in addition to individual reviews.

11:42am – Mr. Vinton reviewed the conflicts of interest policy and procedures, Colorado Open Records Act. He asked that all Committee members keep in mind that all documents can be made open while making comments, and that some commentary may be made collectively. Mr. Jaeckel explained that because we are an open body, communications should come via public forum. Mr. Ikard asked if he and the other Committee members can have conversations about the applications, and Mr. Jaeckel explained that they should not. Mr. Vinton explained that the Grant Administration's Team role is to bring the various inputs together in a way that allows us to stay compliant.

11:46am – Mr. Vinton reviewed the resources provided to Committee members to aid their review process, and provided recommendations on what to focus on in order to support their understanding of the landscape for applications received.

11:51am – Mr. Vinton reviewed the templates Committee members will receive to see / review applications and how to get additional help navigating the Submittable platform. Ms. Cristal Maria, Senior Program Associate at Common Group shared that additional training resources

will be shared as well. Mr. Vinton pointed out the checklist Committee members can follow to ensure they've completed the review steps.

11:56am – Mr. Ikard if the entire Committee will meet together in person at any point, and Mr. Vinton explained that it is not currently planned. Ms. Myrick expressed excitement to read the application and what thought applications give to the potential impact to the entire state and not just their cities. Mr. Vinton responded that the intention is to fund programs that represent solutions across the state. Mr. Ikard agreed with Ms. Myrick's sentiment.

11:58am – Mr. Jaeckel emphasized that we will look for regional distribution of awards given. He thanked the group for their participation in this process.

12pm -- The meeting adjourned.