

Business Coaching Program

Q & A

Q. Volume & Capacity: The RFP mentions an award between \$100k - \$150k. Do you have an estimated target number of businesses you expect the selected consultant to serve within this budget?

A. We estimate the number of businesses served by each firm to be 15 to 25.

Q. Project Timeline: We note the start date is anticipated for May 2026. What is the expected duration of the contract? Is this a 12-month engagement?

A. The contract engagement is for 12 months, with the possibility of up to 4 renewals depending on performance.

Q. Technology & Software Costs: The RFP specifies a "fixed price hourly-rate". Can this hourly rate include the cost of software licenses or digital tools provided to the businesses to digitize their operations?

A. No, we do not expect to cover the cost of software licenses or digital tools. Proposed hourly rates must cover all of your costs.

Q. Deliverables: Beyond the "Business Plans" and "Financial Statements" mentioned, are there other specific tangible outputs required? For example, does the Department require proof of loan submission or just the preparation of the documents?

A. The Department requires proof of completed loan and grants applications. The department will also identify other documentable milestones based on business and program needs.

Q. Case Mix (Growth vs. Succession): The Scope of Work highlights both "Access to Capital" and "Succession Planning". Do you anticipate a specific split between these two categories? (e.g., 80% needing funding help vs. 20% needing succession planning?).

A. The Department will select multiple providers for the access to capital scope of work including InStore Forgivable Loan and Philadelphia Business Lending Network programs, and one provider for business succession planning.

Q. Client Intake: The RFP states consultants will work with businesses "identified by the Commerce Department". Will these businesses be assigned in cohorts/batches, or will they be referred on a rolling basis throughout the contract period?

A. The Commerce Department will be the primary business referral source and will share businesses on a rolling basis.

Q. How are businesses identified and selected to participate in the Business Coaching program?

A. Most businesses will be identified by Commerce staff. Additionally, other stakeholders, such as commercial corridor managers, can refer potential businesses but they will be vetted for eligibility and shared with the Business Coaching provider via Commerce.

Q. What is the expected duration of engagement with selected businesses? I see a contract start date of May 2026, but no end date.

A. The contract duration is 12 months, with up to 4 possible renewals depending on performance.

Q. Will there be a maximum number of businesses assigned to a business/consultant?

A. We anticipate each Business Coaching provider will work with a range of 15 to 25 businesses, depending on each business scope of work.

Q. Are there quantitative goals and metrics that the City wants to see from this program?

A. Examples of quantitative goals and metrics would include, completed loan or grant programs applications, reaching businesses identified milestones

Q. Is there a standard business assessment? Or is each consultant expected to develop their own?

A. Commerce will provide a standard assessment, but we expect the providers to further develop and tailor assessments according to business goals.

Q. How will "success" be determined?

A. Commerce will measure success by counting the number of completed applications, growth milestones achieved, qualitative success stories and positive reviews based on surveys.

Q. Eligibility Requirement: The RFP specifies "Philadelphia-based consultants." If a consulting firm is registered in another state but maintains a physical presence for in-person meetings within Philadelphia, would that firm be eligible? Additionally, would registering to do business in Pennsylvania before contract execution satisfy this requirement?

A. Consultants must have a location in Philadelphia but can be primarily based outside of the city.

Q. Scope of Services

Should consultants directly prepare financial statements, projections, and funding applications for clients, or is the expectation primarily coaching and guidance while the business owner completes the documentation?

A. Consultant will directly provide services where necessary and expeditious to reaching business goals. Coaching can also be employed on tasks if it is determined to be in the best interests of time and resources.

Q. Reporting Requirements. What type of reporting system or documentation will consultants be required to submit, and are reporting and coordination activities considered billable hours?

A. Direct service hourly rate is all encompassing, including cost of administrative work.

Q. Billing & Compensation. How frequently may consultants invoice, and what is the typical payment timeline after invoice submission?

A. Invoices are submitted monthly; payment can be expected within 14 business days of submission.

Q. What methodology or deliverables does the Department of Commerce require to consider a business "bankable" (i.e., ready to apply for a bank loan)?

Each lending institution that the Department of Commerce partners with for the PBLN program has their own lending requirements and criteria.

Q. Is there a guaranteed minimum of consulting hours to be met monthly? Or does the pipeline flow depend entirely on the number of leads reaching the Department of Commerce? For example, could there be a month with zero hours generated and another with 200 hours?

A. There are no guaranteed minimum consulting hours per month. The pipeline flow depends on the number of leads reaching the Department of Commerce. However, we will equally distribute the leads as they come in among all selected Business Coaching partners.

Q: How many hours are applicants expected to complete per week?

A: On average, coaches are expected to provide approximately 40 hours per client based on the needs of the client/business, but there is no cap on the hours necessary.

Q: Will any additional languages be required for clients?

A: If coaches have the capacity to offer other languages, then we welcome the idea and have translation tools for them to utilize.

Q: If applicants have a CDFI partner, should they be included on application?

A: Yes.