



NJ DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF FAITH-BASED INITIATIVES GRANT PROGRAM

PROJECT ATLAS

To download the grant guidelines, click <https://www.state.nj.us/state/ofbi.shtml>

Background and Purpose

The New Jersey Department of State, Office of Faith Based Initiatives (OFBI), is soliciting applications for Project ATLAS a capacity building program designed to build the sustainability of faith and community-based organizations (FBCOs). The purpose of Project ATLAS is to provide capacity building grants, technical assistance, and customized coaching, identified by the OFBI that will strengthen the viability and capacity of participating FBCOs to provide quality social services to the community as specified in this announcement.

Grant requests may not exceed **\$10,000**.

Grant Awards are Subject to the Availability of Funding
Application Due Date: February 28, 2025 @ 4:00PM

Organizations that received a Project ATLAS Grant in FY24 or FY25 cannot apply for Project ATLAS in FY26

Training Webinars:

Technical assistance training and Q&A webinars will be found on OFBI's website <https://www.state.nj.us/state/ofbi.shtml>. Scroll down to "Spotlights" click "Grant Opportunities" then click "Webinars" located on the right-hand side.

Applicant organizations must:

- ◆ Meet all requirements for eligibility;
- ◆ Establish a Project ATLAS Leadership Team:
 - A leadership team is comprised of 3-5 volunteers. They can be your existing board members or if the organization does not have a board of directors, the leadership team can be what is developed into the organization's advisory board;
- ◆ Assure that Team members attend required technical assistance sessions, conferences, and workshops;
- ◆ Work with an OFBI identified coach to develop an individualized organization sustainability assessment;
- ◆ Spend grant award resources to achieve targeted sustainability outcomes and implement a pilot project relative to the needs of the community;

- ◆ Generally, dedicate the time and effort needed to work effectively under this initiative;
- ◆ Assure strict compliance with all State requirements as specified in this grant guideline.

Ineligible Applicants:

- ◆ Houses of Worship;

Eligibility Criteria:

- ◆ Applicant must:
- ◆ Be a non-profit Faith and/or Community-Based Organization serving low-income residents;
- ◆ Must be tax-exempt by determination of the Internal Revenue Service in accordance with Section 501(c)(3) and upload their 2024 IRS Determination Letter that states that the organization is created for charitable purposes and not for religious purposes;
- ◆ Must be registered with the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs and have a valid Charity Registration Number and be IN COMPLIANCE with the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs, Charitable Registration and Investigation Section
- ◆ Be registered with the NJ Department of Treasury - Division of Revenue and Enterprise Services and must have a valid Business Revenue Number;
- ◆ Be IN GOOD STANDING with the Department of Treasury - Business Service Center
- ◆ Applicants must have their Certificate of Incorporation;
- ◆ Applicant organizations must have been in existence for one (1) year or more;
- ◆ Applicants must be willing to actively participate in mandatory training and technical assistance sessions.

Nature of Capacity Building and Sustainability Activities

Capacity building may be defined as “your organization’s ability to identify and prioritize its development goals and achieve specific improvements that help you more effectively fulfill your mission.” Sustainability, which results from ongoing capacity building, is the long-term stability and viability of your organization in the community.

Project ATLAS applicants will establish “high performing work teams,” referred in this document as Project ATLAS Leadership teams that work with an experienced capacity building coach, identified by the NJ OFBI, to improve FBCO sustainability. A high performing work team is a group of individuals who work interdependently to perform effectively and achieve common goals with each member sharing 100% responsibility for success.

Specific examples of Project ATLAS capacity building and sustainability activities, customized to the specific needs of each organization, are:

- ◆ Developing effective boards and board governance processes;
- ◆ Building the skills and stewardship abilities of executive leaders;
- ◆ Developing and implementing long-term strategic plans;
- ◆ Enhancing technological capacity;
- ◆ Building partnerships and collaborations with other community organizations; and
- ◆ Learning how to evaluate, document and improve the outcomes and impact of services.

The proposed approach will ensure that funds are matched to the developmental needs and funding levels of the organization. A minimum of 50 percent of training and technical assistance to grantees will be in the form of direct and individualized technical assistance to address the identified priority needs of the nonprofit organization (i.e., “one-on-one” assistance to the organizations leadership, key staff, and/or board). The estimated number of hours for customized technical assistance and capacity building will equal or exceed the number of hours of training.

Eligible Budget Expenses

Eligible expenses for grantees will be aligned with the developmental needs of the organization as guided by the Sustainability Assessment and are limited to the following four categories with examples of project possibilities under each category:

Leadership Development

- Create a volunteer management plan;
- Create a volunteer recruitment plan;
- Create board policies;
- Create executive succession plan;
- Engage executive coach;
- Implement a volunteer management plan;
- Provide management/leadership training to staff;
- Provide training/written information for board of directors;
- Recruit board members;
- Recruit volunteers (non-board);

Organizational Development

- Create a staff performance review process;
- Create a strategic plan;
- Create financial management procedures/ improve internal controls;
- Create job descriptions;
- Create marketing materials;
- Create/revise organizational identity;
- Create/update an annual report;
- Implement a new accounting system;
- Implement a new budgeting process;
- Implement a staff performance review process;
- Implement new financial management procedures;
- Incorporate as a legally recognized organization;
- Install IT infrastructure;
- Obtain 501(c)(3) status with the IRS;
- Create a revenue development plan;
- Identify potential funding sources;

- Implement donor tracking software;
- Provide revenue development training to staff

Program Development

- Analyze outcome data /evaluate effectiveness of current services;
- Collect information related to service recipient outcomes;
- Collect information related to service recipient satisfaction;
- Create an outcome measurement plan;
- Implement systems to keep information related to client needs, referral sources, and services;
- Implement systems to keep records on service recipient satisfaction and/or outcomes;
- Obtain program related equipment and durable supplies;
- Research and develop new programs or services;
- Take steps to expand current services to new geographic area;
- Take steps to increase the effectiveness of existing services;
- Take steps to increase the number of clients served in existing geographic area;
- Take steps to increase the number or scope of services;
- Take steps to reach an underserved population in existing geographic area;

Community Engagement

- Assess effectiveness of existing collaborative efforts;
- Conduct assessment of community needs;
- Create a map/inventory of community assets;
- Create action plan for coordinating/collaborating;
- Create or update a brochure;
- Create or update a Web site;
- Create processes for collaborating with partners;
- Develop new strategic partnerships;
- Establish partnership agreements;
- Make presentations to community groups

Readiness Assessment

The purpose of Project ATLAS is to build the sustainability of faith and community based nonprofit organizations and their capacity to provide quality services in the community. To achieve these goals, Project ATLAS grantee organizations must be ready to actively engage in and benefit from capacity building activities. This Readiness Assessment is an important part of your Project ATLAS proposal; complete it with the members of your leadership team after reviewing the Grant Guidelines in its entirety. For each question, circle the number that best describes your present readiness to participate in Project ATLAS. If you need to make any changes to assure that you are ready, briefly describe them in that section. To download the Readiness Assessment, click <https://www.state.nj.us/state/ofbi.shtml> scroll down to “Spotlights”

click on “Grant Opportunities,” under “Supporting Documents” click on the “Project ATLAS Readiness Assessment” link.

Project ATLAS applications will be rated by a panel of independent, objective reviewers, for both quality and completeness. The objective reviewers will assign a point value indicating *the extent to which the applicant has:*

- ◆ Demonstrated a thorough understanding of Project ATLAS;
- ◆ Responded to all of the requirements detailed in the description/criteria;
- ◆ Presented a complete and consistent response.

The determination of high or low scores will be based on the reviewer’s assessment of the extent to which the applicant has met the specific requirements of each section (as detailed in the table that follows). To ensure that reviewers have consistent, transparent, and permissible criteria for selecting applicants, all applications will be rated according to the criteria and point structure presented in the table immediately following with a maximum possible score of 100 points. A minimum score of 60 is required. Applications that score 60 or lower will not be considered for funding.

Program Procedures:

Applications are submitted to the OFBI on the System for Administering Grants Electronically (SAGE) and reviewed by an outside independent panel. Recommendation for funding is based solely on the merit of the application. Award and denial letters are e-mailed to the appropriate organizations via the SAGE system. **Funding period is from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026.**

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The proposal is to be submitted via the Department of State – System Administering Grants Electronically (SAGE) no later than **February 28, 2025 @ 4:00PM.**

All applications must consist of and include the following items in order to be considered complete.

**Applications missing requested information will be disqualified from review;
Applications rating 60 percent or lower will not be considered for funding.**

Grant Awards are Subject to the Availability of Funding

Application Requirements and Rating Criteria			
Section	Limits	Description/Criteria	Maximum Rating
Project Summary	4,000 characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Briefly state the mission, history of the organization;• Briefly state the number of years, number of people served and type of services provided;	20 Points

Application Requirements and Rating Criteria			
Section	Limits	Description/Criteria	Maximum Rating
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly explain your understanding of the Project ATLAS grant. The description must indicate the readiness to participate and commitment to strengthening your organization's sustainability and capacity to provide quality targeted services. 	
Organizational Capacity	4,000 Characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a brief overview of the organization's capacity needs. Describe the leadership makeup of the organization. It's board of directors, who are they, what skills do they bring to the organization, how long have they served, how many times does the board meet. How long has the Executive Director been leading the organization? What are the ways, if any, that the organization is planning or is actually grooming and mentoring leadership within the organization. 	10 pts
Readiness Assessment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene your Project ATLAS leadership team and work together to assess your FBCO's readiness to participate by answering all of the questions listed in the Readiness Assessment. To download a fillable Readiness Assessment click https://www.state.nj.us/state/ofbi.shtml scroll down to "Spotlights" click on "Grant Opportunities," under "Supporting Documents" click on "Readiness Assessment and upload the completed Readiness Assessment under "Required Appendices". 	N/A
Statement of Need	4,000 characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After reviewing the results of the readiness assessment developed by your team briefly summarize your organization's need to strengthen long term sustainability and build capacity to serve the community; 	20 Points

Application Requirements and Rating Criteria			
Section	Limits	Description/Criteria	Maximum Rating
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List the members of your proposed Project ATLAS Leadership Team including their name; Indicate which surveys, needs assessments were used to inform the organization that the program it is applying for is needed in the community. Did the applicant utilize the Human Services Advisory Councils (HSAC) needs assessments to assure that the social issue being addressed is identified in the HSAC needs assessment? If the social issue is not identified in the HSAC why is the organization applying for the project? 	
Statement of Collaboration	1,500 characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify three collaborating partners and how will the partnership support the organization's ability to implement the project designed to solve the identified social issue. What ways will the collaborating partners work with the organization to address the identified social issue? 	5 Points
Project Design	5,000 characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the training and technical assistance that the organization has identified to benefit from the Project Atlas program. Provide a detailed description of the Pilot project. The reader should have a full understanding of the step by step account of what a client will go through in order to maximize program benefit. 	15 Points
Target Population	5,000 Characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the target population, where do they live, what are their ages, what is their income level, educational status, single individuals or families or both, what percentage are employed or underemployed, etc. 	5 points

Application Requirements and Rating Criteria			
Section	Limits	Description/Criteria	Maximum Rating
Capacity Building and Project Goals	5,000 characters	<p>Capacity S.M.A.R.T. Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present a preliminary list of capacity building goals that may be included in your sustainability work plan; • Identify your priorities for capacity building and why are they important; <p>Pilot Project S.M.A.R.T. Goals</p> <p>S pecific: Well defined, clear and unambiguous</p> <p>M easureble: With specific criteria that measure your progress toward the accomplishment of the goal</p> <p>A chievable: Attainable and not impossible to achieve</p> <p>R elavant: Within reach, realistic and relevant to the clients life purpose</p> <p>T ime-bound: With a clearly defined timeline, including a starting date and a target date. The purpose is to create urgency</p> <p>Smart Goals Resource Links:</p> <p>Activity and Program Smart Goals</p> <p>Example of Smart Goals for Service to Seniors</p> <p>A How to Guide for Smart Goals</p> <p>13 Smart Goals Examples</p> <p>13 Smart Goals for Food Insecurity</p>	15 Points
Evaluation	5,000 Characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicate how you will measure whether and to what extent the program success has been achieved. 	10 Points

Application Requirements and Rating Criteria			
Section	Limits	Description/Criteria	Maximum Rating
Budget	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete all budget forms in the SAGE system; • \$2,000 of grant funds can be used for the purchase of technology; • \$1,500 of grant funds can be used for administrative costs; • \$1,000 of grant funds can be used for staff development; • 85% max of grant funds can be used for personnel. 	10 Points
Required Appendices	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Resolution • Readiness Assessment • Previous Year Executed 990EZ • 3 Letters of support • Logic Model • Capacity Building Logic Model • Pilot Project Logic Model 	
Appendices	N/A		N/A
Total			100 Possible Points

Restrictions and Limitations

◆ Nondiscrimination by Religious Organizations and Entities

Applicants agree that if provided funds from the New Jersey Department of State Office of Faith-based Initiatives, they will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for services or participation in the proposed program on the basis of religion, race, gender and/or physical disabilities.

◆ Recognition of Cultural Sensitivity

Applicants must assure that all programs are linguistically appropriate and culturally relevant to groups within the community. Appropriate accommodations for services will be developed and maintained for those individuals who are deprived of reasonable access to those services

due to language barriers or ethnic and cultural differences. All programs and services *must* be reflective of the demographic needs of the community, while providing all people the opportunity to experience any and all available services irrespective of their ethnic or cultural heritage.

◆ Reporting Requirements

All funding recipients are required to submit quarterly programmatic and fiscal reports. Schedules of due dates for reporting periods and program terms will be provided upon notification of preliminary approval of award. Funding recipients must adhere to a schedule determined by the New Jersey Department of State Office of Faith Based Initiatives

◆ Training

All funding recipients are required to attend technical assistance and training sessions scheduled throughout the fiscal year as coordinated by the New Jersey Department of State Office of Faith-based Initiatives and or its training intermediary

- ◆ Applications that fail to meet these requirements detailed in the grant guidelines will not be reviewed and will be disqualified. All applicants will be notified by letter regarding the outcome of their award.
- ◆ Grant awards may only be used to further the capacity building and sustainability of the recipients' social service efforts. Paying for organized fundraising or solicitation, construction and purchase of real property, medical/health-related activities or items, direct provision of services or augmenting/supplanting direct service delivery funds with Federal funds is unallowable.
- ◆ Grants may not be used to build an organization's capacity to provide programs or services that include inherently religious activities. If a recipient provides programs or services that include inherently religious activities, such activities must be separate in time or location from the programs or services that the organization is seeking to improve through this Sub-Award.
- ◆ Grantee's activities are governed by all applicable State and Federal laws and regulations and will be provided directly to individual nonprofit faith-based and community organizations to develop the sustainability of that organization. Collaborations are not eligible to apply and grant funds may not be re-awarded to other organizations.
- ◆ Funds will not be used to support inherently religious activities such as religious instruction, worship, or proselytizing not may funds may not be used to build the capacity to provide programs or services that include inherently religious activities, The New Jersey Department of State reserves the right to reject any and all proposals when circumstances indicate that it is in its best interest to do so including, but not limited to, loss of funding for the contract, insufficient infrastructure, the applicant's failure to provide adequate services, indication of misrepresentation of information and/or non-compliance with any existing State or Federal laws and regulations, contracts or procedures. Sub-Awards applications document the applicant's readiness to participate in capacity building constituting a preliminary assessment of an organization's capacity building and sustainability needs, scope of coaching services and budget. At the discretion of OFBI, capacity building/sustainability goals and budgets may be amended after the coach has worked with the Leadership Team to complete a comprehensive assessment and develop a realistically achievable work plan.

Selection and Notification of Award

- ◆ All applications are screened for eligibility and conformity with the specifications in the grant guidelines. Applications that fail to meet these requirements will not be reviewed and will be disqualified.
- ◆ Applicants are not pre-selected. All applications are rated by a panel of independent, objective reviewers according to the precise selection criteria specified in the grant guidelines. All applicants will be notified by email via SAGE.
- ◆ The independent committee reviewing and scoring applications will not include individuals employed by the organization, affiliated with the organization, organization's board members, contractors, training providers, providers of cost share or in-kind support, or any organization/individuals affiliated in any way with the organization.

Post Award Requirements

Project ATLAS grant recipients must assure that its Leadership Team is available and committed to work with a Capacity Building Coach to comply with the following post-award requirements:

- ◆ **Once grantees receive their award letter, grantees have 90 from the date of the letter to upload all required documents in SAGE. If required documents are not uploaded within 90 days of receiving their award letter funding will be rescinded.**
- ◆ OFBI will require grant recipients to work with a technical assistance coach to submit detail work plans, interim progress report (verbal report by coach) and written final report
- ◆ OFBI will monitor grantee compliance with grant requirements, in the event of non-compliance and request appropriate documentation. Should the grantee fail to comply with these requests, sanctions may be implemented up to and including the repayment of State funds, if necessary.
- ◆ Work with an assigned coach to assess the respective FBCO's Sustainability
- ◆ Prioritize Capacity Building Needs
- ◆ Develop a grant award Work Plan and Budget that Meets the Specific Sustainability Needs Identified
- ◆ Implement and Monitor the Sustainability Work Plan
- ◆ Promptly Respond to Requests for Communication and Information
- ◆ Participate in all Required Events, Activities and Evaluations
- ◆ Comply with all OFBI Contracting, Fiscal Monitoring and Other Reporting Requirements