**FAQ CatalystQ RFP**

1. Will QACETD lead outreach and participant selection, or is the applicant responsible for both recruitment and intake?

**Response: QACETD will lead outreach and participant selection.**

1. Will the County promote the program through its channels (e.g., newsletters, social media, website)?

**Response: QACETD will handle all promotions of the program.**

1. Are there any priority business types or industries (e.g., technology, service, early-stage microenterprises) that QACETD is especially focused on supporting?

**Response: The program targets minority entrepreneurs and small business owners in Queen Anne’s County. No specific industry is named as a priority, though underrepresented and early-stage entrepreneurs are emphasized.**

1. Can you confirm the anticipated per-participant allocation for mini-grants, and any restrictions or reporting requirements related to their use?

**Response: The $100,000 budget includes mini grants. The specific per-participant amount is not defined. Applicants may propose a structure. The contractor will assist in the administration of these grants in conjunction with QACETD. Reporting will be required.**

1. Is a hybrid delivery model (with both virtual and in-person components) acceptable?

**Response: It is anticipated that this program will largely be in person training; however, QACETD is not opposed to a virtual session being integrated into the curriculum.**

1. Will QACETD or its partners be providing any physical space (e.g. for workshops)? If not, should applicants budget for venue rental?

**Response: Facility will be provided.**

1. Could you clarify the required frequency and format for reporting program outcomes, participant progress, and financial expenditures?

**Response: Reporting has not been specified in RFP but will be agreed upon as part of the contract with the selected consultant. Reporting should be included in the work plan and will most likely include program outcomes, participant progress and financials as it relates to mini grants and draws on contract.**

1. Is there a local stakeholder committee, economic development council, or advisory group involved in shaping or reviewing this initiative?

**Response: The selected consultant will have a direct point of contact with QACETD staff member who will be responsible for oversight on the project. There will be a committee made up of the EDC and community members that will be part of the RFP selection committee as well as the participant selection committee.**

1. Will there be future funding opportunities or partnerships available to sustain participant support beyond December 2025?

**Response: Yes, the funding and program are anticipated to continue beyond December 2025.**

1. Should proposed program designs encompass all listed technical assistance and entrepreneur support services areas or should designs draw from this list?

**Response: The scope for this RFP is broad to allow for creativity and customization, but the expectation is that the program should encompass a combination of the services mentioned in the RFP.**

1. The solicitation states that one or more contractors may be selected to deliver the contract. Is the $100,000 referenced in the solicitation per contractor for the **contract overall?**

**Response: No. The $100,000 is total funding and will be divided if multiple contractors are selected**.

1. Would you clarify what DEDI Registration is?

**Response: We were referring to** [**Small Minority Disadvantaged Business Registry**](https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/index.aspx?pageid=90) **MBE certifications.**

1. Is there flexibility in the timeline for delivery of the services in the solicitation? We ask because the project start is mid-August, and the anticipated project conclusion is December 2025.

**Response: RFP implies some flexibility. Change orders may be considered post-award to adjust timeline/content based on participant needs.**

1. Does QACETD have space that the selected contract could use to provide in-person technical assistance or entrepreneur support services?

**Response: Yes**

1. I am confirming the Mail-in Submission Deadline is – Monday, August 4th and the Candidates Interviews will be held on Friday, August 8th.

**Response: Correct. Proposals selected for interviews will be notified directly before 8/8.**

1. The Contract Award & Project Start Date is Friday, August 15th; however, I think we will need more than a week to refine the curriculum to specifically address the needs and composition of the Co-hort.  Is it acceptable to hold the first class in the first week of September (immediately following Labor Day holiday)?

**Response: Yes. The contract award will be solidified, and planning will begin on 8/15. Exact start date of program will be determined in conjunction with selected vendor(s).**

1. Do you have a preferred billing cycle (frequency) for the Contractor?

**Response: Will be determined with selected vendor and based upon workplan and deliverables.**

1. Do you intend to provide a retainer at the time of the Contract Acceptance?

**Response: Will be determined with selected vendor and based upon workplan and deliverables.**

1. In paragraph V. Funding & Budget, it states the award will be paid through December 2025, however, in paragraph IV, it states the program is to be a 3–6-month program.  Because of our proposed content and timeline, we will most likely implement a program that kicks off in September 2025 (after Labor Day) and runs through February 2026 (6 months). Is the funding date fixed in December 2025?

**Response:** **RFP implies some flexibility. Change orders may be considered post-award to adjust timeline/content based on participant needs.**

1. Do the proposals need to include each one of the required technical assistance areas (e.g., accounting + legal advice + marketing + HR+ etc.) and entrepreneur support services, or can proposals focus on one technical assistance area (e.g., marketing and comms)?

**Response: The scope for this RFP is broad to allow for creativity and customization, but the expectation is that the program should encompass a combination of the services mentioned in the RFP.**

1. Could you provide details on the page limit or expectation for proposals to this competition?

**Response: This RFP did not specify page limits other proposal requirements are detailed in section VI. Of the RFP**

1. Can the County provide any material or analytical data generated from the pilot program?

**Response:** [**https://choosequeenannes.com/meta/**](https://choosequeenannes.com/meta/) **Additional information can be shared with the selected vendor.**

1. Although there is a new Governor, is it expected that the Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund will remain available for this Program?

**Response: This program is no longer funded by the Rural Maryland Fund as that program is now closed. In the future Catalyst Q program will be funded by the Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund.**

1. Please confirm that the expected goals are business growth, capacity-building, and increased visibility and connectivity for minority entrepreneurs.

**Response: Goals as outlined in RFP include addressing key barriers faced by minority entrepreneurs, including access to capital, business knowledge, legal and regulatory compliance, and networking.**

1. Section IV Scope of Services – subsection Technical Assistance Areas. Can the organization subcontract for technical assistance areas such as “Accounting & Bookkeeping” and “Legal Advice & Services” to facilitate the license-based advisement services and trainings?

**Response: Yes**

1. Section IV Scope of Services – Entrepreneur Support Services states one of the preferred services includes: “Providing physical space for co-working and/or programming”. Please confirm that the organization is expected to facilitate a workspace for these services or if one will be provided by the County?

**Response: Co-working space will not be provided by the County.**

1. Section IV Scope of Services – Entrepreneur Support Services “Workshops addressing critical business topics (suggested)” Please confirm if this service is required or suggested?

**Response: All topics/services are suggested.**

1. Are all organizations mandated to provide all required technical assistance areas and entrepreneur support services; considering the County may choose to award to one or more organizations? Adding further, will the County select the best presented services from different organizations to fit overall scope of services and/or budget?

**Response: Selection will be based upon the evaluation criteria outlined in section VII and based upon overall proposal not solely on budget. Organizations are not mandated to provide all technical assistance areas as these are only suggested. Subcontracting for technical services is also permitted.**

1. F1 Section V. Funding & Budget states “This funding also includes small mini grants to participants for further professional assistance with services such as accounting, legal, certificates, etc.” Is the offeror expected to provide this information in the budget and if so, can your agency confirm the amount of mini grants and amounts? Is the organization responsible for determining the amount of grants and funding levels for this program

**Response: This should be included in the budget as an estimated line item as the amounts may vary and the number of participants may vary. Details on the mini grants can be solidified in the contract.**

1. Please confirm that the total amount for the program is $100,000.00 and that if more than one organization is chosen for award, the $100,000.00 shall be divided among the awarded parties.

**Response: Yes**

1. Can you provide insight into the criteria for selecting or screening program participants?

**Response: Please see the prior year program application and information on our website:** [**https://choosequeenannes.com/meta/**](https://choosequeenannes.com/meta/)

1. Are there minimum qualifications the participants must meet to participate in the program?  Can this be shared with the selected vendor once it is known?

**Response: Yes, it will be shared and feedback from selected vendor will be taken into consideration.**

1. Have potential participants been given an expectation of frequency and length of sessions?

**Response: No. Details on the program will be subject to selected vendor timeline and program suggested meeting frequency, etc.**

1. Are there restrictions or conditions on how participants may use this grant funding?

**Response: Yes. We anticipate that mini grants will be specific to participant needs and will not be used for working capital or equipment purchases.**

1. Should we plan to co-brand outreach and storytelling efforts with QACETD?

**Response: Marketing efforts and storytelling will be coordinated with QACETD.**

1. Additionally, we noticed there are two other accelerator programs offered by the County—can you clarify how those programs relate to this RFP?

**Response: Yes. The Meta program will now be relaced by CATALYSTQ which is specific to Minority businesses. The Ignite and Elevate accelerator programs are open to all participants and not related to this RFP.**

1. Do you prefer traditional metrics (e.g., business formation, funding access) or are you open to narrative evaluations and wellbeing indicators?

**Response. QACETD would like both.**