

Energy & Manufacturing Startup Mini-Grant Program

MINI-GRANT AWARDEE REQUIREMENTS

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SECTION I – GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Introduction

The Energy & Manufacturing Startup Mini-grant Program is funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission through the Tri-State Net Zero Manufacturing Initiative ARC Grant, administered through Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission in partnership with Catalyst Connection, Johnstown Area Regional Industries (JARI), MAGNET, and West Virginia MEP. This initiative provides help to small and medium manufacturers to understand opportunities in energy supply chains and/or ways they can reduce the carbon footprint in their own businesses.

The Energy & Manufacturing Startup Mini-Grant Program will provide funding support for current or future manufacturing companies to assist them in their business creation. This project expects to provide mini-grants of up to \$2,500 per business. The Tri-State Net Zero Manufacturing initiative covers a 47-county region of Appalachia in Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

B. Program Eligibility

Applicants requesting mini-grant assistance through this program must meet all the criteria listed below to be eligible for funding consideration:

- **Business Start Date** – created on or after October 1, 2022. Business creation refers to "applicable business registration" where the business owner has federal EIN, state Enterprise Registration for state sales tax or other licenses, fictitious name registration, or any other license/registration/permit that is needed to operate a business. Applicants should submit a copy of one of these documents with a date of 10/1/22 or after. If the business has not registered prior to submission, applicant should provide an explanation of where they are in this process. Preference will be given to applications from registered businesses.
- **Manufacturing** – defined as a company having less than 500 employees at their location where the project takes place and registered in D&B with a manufacturing [NAICS code](#) beginning with 31-33. If applicant does not have a manufacturing NAICS code, they should explain how the business currently or seeks to manufacture products.
- **Role in Energy** – provide a statement about how your business is currently part of an energy supply chain or a desired role that you are working toward. Examples could include the following:

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- Manufacture netting that is used near wind turbines to keep wildlife away from wind turbine blades.
 - Developed a software app that can track gas usage and mileage for a fleet of trucks. Analysis and predictions can be used to help the user make adjustments to transportation routes and scheduling to reduce costs/emissions.
 - Have a patent for glass coating that can increase performance of solar panels. Seeking a partner or contract manufacturer to begin production.
- **Energy Segments** – 9 *Power Generation & Management* and 6 *Products-Related* energy segments are listed in Section A10 to select all of those that you currently or seek to support. Applicants may write in a segment next to Other for any that are not listed.
- **Location** – business is located within one of the 47 counties of the Tri-State Net Zero Manufacturing Initiative that includes:
 - Ohio - Ashtabula, Belmont, Carroll, Columbiana, Harrison, Holmes, Jefferson, Mahoning, Trumbull, Tuscarawas
 - Pennsylvania - Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Somerset, Washington, Westmoreland
 - West Virginia - Berkeley, Boone, Braxton, Brooke, Hancock, Jefferson, Kanawha, Marion, Marshall, Mason, Mercer, Monongalia, Monroe, Morgan, Nicholas, Ohio, Pleasants, Putnam, Randolph, Raleigh, Summers, Taylor, Tyler, Upshur, Wetzel
- **Stipend Use** – Applicants should identify how the funds awarded will be used and the amount requested up to \$2,500. The project cost may be greater than \$2,500, but this is the maximum amount that can be requested. A project title should be entered that summarizes the usage. Examples could include the following:
 - Website Creation – A website will be setup for ABC Inc. to promote my products to target customers in the hydrogen energy supply chain. Requesting \$2,500 toward these costs.
 - Product Testing – Received a proposal for \$8,000 from a third-party company to stress test our plastic alternative material. The results are needed to show potential buyers that are looking for integrity standards. Requesting \$2,500 toward this proposal.
 - Trade Show Registration – I will attend the Shale Insight Conference in September to make connections for my well-plugging product. I am requesting \$2,500 toward the registration cost and printing expenses for informational materials.

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C. Eligible Uses

Mini-grant funds are intended specifically for projects to assist with entering or expanding into one or more energy supply chains as part of this program. Mini-grant dollars may be used to support direct, project-related consulting costs, contracted services, software purchases, supplies, and one-time costs related to the implementation of advanced manufacturing technology or process improvement. Costs must be allowable, directly allocable to this project, and reasonable.

Technical Assistance dollars **cannot** be used for the following expenses:

1. Purchase of equipment if the cost of a single item is more than \$10,000.
2. Support recurring costs related to connectivity
3. Support internal salary costs of the applicant
4. Replace existing grant funds received by the applicant or support costs already paid for by another government grant (duplicate funding)
5. Pay for travel
6. Support indirect costs
7. Investment of equity or working capital
8. In-kind costs
9. Support other costs prohibited by ARC, state or federal law (for example: lobbying, or relocation costs)

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SECTION II – THE APPLICATION PROCESS

A. Application Submission

Catalyst Connection and its partners have staff available to assist SME manufacturers through the technical assistance process from assessment, project selection, scoping, and application. The Catalyst Connection Point of Contact is the Energy Manufacturing Program Manager. Companies may refer to www.wemakeithere.org/energy to contact the program manager concerning questions regarding potential projects, eligibility, or application completion.

Applications will be accepted between March 31, 2025 and April 18, 2025. All eligible applications received during this time will be reviewed in April and awards will be made to those that the review committee identify as a good fit for the goals of the Energy & Manufacturing in Appalachia program. The Energy & Manufacturing Startup Mini-Grant Program reserves the right to award applications as they see fit and deny any applications without explanation. After this funding round is complete, all applicants will be notified of the status of award or denial.

The completed and signed application along with any additional documentation should be emailed to Anna Mancuso, Mini-grant Project Manager, Catalyst Connection at amancuso@catalystconnection.org no later than 4:00 PM EDT on April 18, 2025.

Contents of the Application

1. **Completed Application Form** - signed by the applicant
2. **Business Registration Documentation** – if available
3. **W-9 Form** – with business EIN or equivalent

B. Application Review and Approval Process

Upon receipt, applications will be reviewed to ensure that the parameters for eligibility are met and that all required application components are included.

Applications will be reviewed by the Energy & Manufacturing Program Review Committee. Committee members include representatives from Catalyst Connection who ensure applications meet award criteria, state and federal requirements.

In some cases, the applicant may be asked to provide clarification and/or to submit additional documentation in support of its application. The extent of the information required, and the timeliness of response will determine whether the project can be considered.

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C. Award Criteria

Applications will be reviewed and approved if the following criteria are met, and funding is available:

1. All program eligibility criteria are met (see **Section I, B. Program Eligibility**).
2. A clearly defined project and stipend use (see **Section I, C. Eligible Uses**).
3. Approval by the Review Committee – they reserve the right to award or deny any application

D. Post-Approval Process

Applicants will receive written notification of application status within 30 days of the application deadline. Award notifications will include additional instructions and details on next steps and contractual requirements.

Catalyst Connection will provide project management support to awardees to assist with reporting and invoicing requirements.

E. Disbursement of Funds

Stipend awards are paid following completion of:

- Completed application plus any requested support documentation
- Applicants' W-9

Contingency of Payment on Federal Fund Disbursement

Payment for services under this award is contingent upon the receipt of federal funds allocated through the grant. While provisions for advance payment requests have been made, the awarding entity shall not be liable for payment if federal funds are not received. In the event of a delay or non-disbursement of funds from the federal government, no payment obligation shall be incurred by the awarding entity, and the recipient acknowledges the risk of non-payment under such circumstances.

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F. Reporting and Record Keeping Requirements

Awardees are responsible for the following reporting and record keeping requirements:

1. Comply with all state and federal rules regarding the maintenance of appropriate contractual and accounting documentation. These files must be available for review by the Commonwealth, auditors, the project sponsor, and/or fiscal agent upon request.
2. Report updates to the project status to Catalyst Connection when they occur.

SECTION III – Contact for Manufacturers

Contact for more information:

Catalyst Connection

Anna Mancuso, Mini-grant Project Manager

4501 Lytle Street, Suite 301

Pittsburgh, PA 15207

Email: amancuso@catalystconnection.org

Website: <http://www.wemakeithere.org/energy>

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