



Women.nyc Digital Networking Platform Public Solicitation for Services and/or Funding

*Updated as of January 22, 2021 **

OBJECTIVE

Women.nyc, an initiative of the New York City Economic Development Corporation (“NYCEDC”), seeks to decrease disparities in professional networks by connecting New Yorkers across communities on a Digital Networking Platform (the “Platform”). On the Platform, established professionals will offer free, one-on-one informational “office hours” where emerging professionals can connect for mentorship, coaching, and network-building (the “Project”).

Studies show that people network with people similar to themselves, and they seek career advice from friends, family, and peers. As a result, where you grow up, go to school, and work can give you up to a twelvefold advantage in gaining access to opportunity. This disparity or “network gap,” only grows as the challenges of remote work lead to decreased in-person opportunities for professional advancement.

COVID-19 has exposed and deepened pre-existing income inequities stemming from the under-representation of women and New Yorkers of color in well-paying jobs and in senior roles in organizations. Educational and training gaps as well as less-robust professional networks contribute to these disparities.

Scalable, inclusive, and equity-driven, the Platform will rally the women of New York City to connect across communities to close these long-standing gaps.

The idea of a vehicle to seed personal connections as a means of creating career inroads was born out of conversations with numerous workforce operators, academics, and relevant City agencies.

At this time, we do not expect to have funding to support the creation of the Platform and are seeking in-kind technological support as well as financial sponsorship to fund this important endeavor, beginning with a pilot in Q1 2021. If offering funding, the amount and type of funding should be available to support the creation and maintenance of the Platform

To achieve these goals, NYCEDC solicits for its women.nyc initiative, partners who can provide the following services:

- **Technology Partner(s):** Technology partner(s) to provide in-kind services for the creation, maintenance, and continued usage of the Platform. We welcome utilizing an existing platform

meeting the majority of our technical needs, and we would then seek funding for continued usage, maintenance, and any customizations or technical upgrades needed to ensure the platform meets the needs of the program (see Sponsor Partner below).

- **Sponsor Partner(s):** Sponsor partner(s) to provide either one or all of the following: Funding for the scaling and continuation of the program, to be used to support both operational program costs and the Platform; volunteer advisors able to advise on a variety of professional development topics, in conjunction with advisors provided by other organizations across a range of subject areas; marketing and positioning of the Platform

THE PROJECT

The Project will kick off with a soft launch of the Platform in the form of a pilot in Q1 2021 (the “Pilot”). The Pilot will run for up to three months, during which the Platform will be accessible to a small group of under 100 users, and a pool of approximately 10 to 15 volunteer advisors. The Pilot will be followed by a larger roll out, whereby the Platform will be open to a broader user group.

We envision that a Technology Partner would design, develop, and host—or provide access to—an existing digital platform, with the following features:

- A mobile-first platform that can serve as a scalable marketplace of volunteer advisors
- A user-friendly interface that invites users to search by interest area
- A simple onboarding process for both advisors and users, which includes, but is not limited to: ability for advisors to create and manage their own landing pages, and a sort functionality for participants to find coaches (sort by topics, industries, companies, career level)
- Appointment management booking and video conference functionality
- Consideration of need for translation and/or accessibility of site in multiple languages or for the vision/hearing-impaired
- User training materials, both for NYCEDC support staff and platform users
- Ongoing maintenance and site improvements for at least one year from launch, with the option to renew
- Data collection capabilities on platform use, in accordance with relevant laws and statutes

NYCEDC ROLE

Through women.nyc, NYCEDC expects to be an active participant in shaping and implementing the Project as well as promoting the Platform through press outreach, social media campaigns, and a marketing ecosystem that includes private-sector companies, nonprofits and City agencies. NYCEDC will also work with other City agencies and community partners to develop mentorship and coaching training for the Platform volunteer advisors.

PROPOSALS

Technology Partner proposals should include:

- Narrative of the services that will be provided including:
 - How the respondent will meet the Project needs and anticipated deliverables described above
 - Expected timeline for each phase of development including user testing and quality assurance
 - Experience in virtual mentoring/networking platforms
 - Team members who will be involved in the Project
 - Anticipated cost of creation and ongoing support of the Platform, including any available sources of funding, including self-funding, philanthropic support, and/or revenue streams
 - Detail on any prior work for or with the City of New York or NYCEDC, including all open contracts, negotiations, or other matters

Sponsoring Partner proposals should include:

- Narrative of the services that will be provided including:
 - Number of employees committed to becoming volunteer advisors, and whether employees will be using company time or personal time for such volunteer activity
 - Expected sources of funding to support creation and ongoing maintenance of the Platform, including self-funding, philanthropic support, and/or revenue streams
 - Detail on any prior work for or with the City of New York or NYCEDC, including all open contracts, negotiations, or other matters

PROPOSED TIMELINE AND SUBMISSION:

Responses will be considered on a rolling basis from December 7, 2020 through **February 26, 2021**, with a view toward launching a pilot in Q1 2021. Respondents shall submit their proposals via electronic upload pursuant to the instructions set forth on the project website webpage (which can be found on <https://edc.nyc/rfps>); Proposals shall be labeled "Digital Networking Platform Solicitation" and uploaded [here](#) as a single zip file with this title Potential respondents should address questions to womennycdigitalplatform@edc.nyc.

Target Pilot Date: Q1 2021

Target Platform Go-Live Date: Q2 2021

DISCLAIMERS

NYCEDC and the City of New York ("City") must solicit support and accept donations in accordance with all applicable provisions of the New York City Charter and Conflict of Interest Board Rules and requirements, including but not limited to City Charter § 2604 and COIB Rule § 1-14. Any contribution to NYCEDC or the City will not affect any business dealings with NYCEDC, NYCIDA, Build NYC, NYCNCC or the City, nor will it provide special access to NYCEDC, NYCIDA, Build NYC, NYCNCC, or City officials.

All materials submitted in response to this solicitation will become the property of NYCEDC and the City. All responses and other materials submitted to NYCEDC and the City in response to this Solicitation may be disclosed in accordance with the standards specified in the Freedom of Information Law, Article 6 of the Public Officers Law ("FOIL"). The entity submitting a proposal may provide in writing, at the time of submission a detailed description of the specific information contained in its submission, which it has determined is a trade secret and which, if disclosed, would substantially harm such entity's competitive position. This characterization shall not be determinative, but will be considered by NYCEDC or the City when evaluating the applicability of any exemptions in response to a FOIL request. NYCEDC reserves the right to issue a Request for Expressions of Intent or Request for Proposals, or any other form of solicitation or procurement, for these or related services in the future.

Neither NYCEDC nor its respective officers, employees, and agents, make any representation or warranty or assume any responsibility for the accuracy of the information set forth in this solicitation. Any due diligence is the responsibility of the respondent.

The proposed project shall conform to, and be subject to all applicable laws, regulations, and ordinances of all Federal, State and City authorities having jurisdiction, as all of the foregoing may be amended from time to time. Neither NYCEDC nor the City are obligated to pay, nor shall in fact pay, any costs or losses incurred by any respondent at any time, including the cost of responding to this solicitation.