

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

2027 CSBG-Funded Partnership Programs

Applicant Instructions and Partnership Application

RFP Release Date	October 1, 2026
Application Deadline	October 30, 2026
Anticipated Funding Period	January 1-December 31, 2027

1. RFP Overview

O.C.E.A.N., Inc. invites eligible organizations to submit proposals to deliver services that address the causes and conditions of poverty in Ocean, Atlantic, and/or Cape May Counties. Awards are expected to be supported with Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds and are subject to funding availability, final approval, contract execution, and all applicable federal, State of New Jersey, and O.C.E.A.N., Inc. requirements.

This is a competitive process. Submission of an application does not guarantee funding, and O.C.E.A.N., Inc. may fund all, part, or none of a proposal; request clarification; negotiate scope, targets, or budget; or reject any application.

An organization may submit more than one application only when each application proposes a distinct program or project. A separate electronic application, program narrative, and line-item budget must be submitted for each proposed program or project.

2. Eligible Applicants

To be considered for funding, an applicant must be a nonprofit organization with documentation of tax-exempt status or another eligible entity specifically approved by O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Proposed services must serve eligible residents of Ocean, Atlantic, and/or Cape May Counties. Applicants must be able to maintain participant eligibility, service, outcome, and financial records and cooperate with monitoring and technical assistance. Organizations should have the administrative, fiscal, staffing, and program capacity to deliver the proposed services during the funding period.

3. Funding and Reimbursement Structure

Maximum request per application: \$75,000. Applicants must submit a reasonable, detailed line-item budget tied directly to the proposed scope and service targets.

The total amount available and the number of awards will depend on final CSBG funding and O.C.E.A.N., Inc. funding decisions. O.C.E.A.N., Inc. may offer a partial award and may negotiate corresponding changes to the scope, service targets, outcomes, or budget before contract execution.

Awards are provided on a reimbursement basis. Reimbursement is limited to costs that are allowable, allocable, reasonable, necessary, properly documented, and incurred within the approved funding period.

Costs must be included in the approved program budget and directly support the approved scope of work. Pre-award costs, future expenses, unpaid expenses, unsupported costs, and costs prohibited by applicable CSBG, NJDCA, State, federal, or O.C.E.A.N., Inc. requirements are not eligible for reimbursement.

Budget revisions, purchases, or cost categories requiring prior approval may not be charged without written authorization from O.C.E.A.N., Inc. Indirect or administrative costs must be clearly identified, supported, and calculated using an approved rate or reasonable allocation methodology.

4. Participant Eligibility and Documentation

Participants receiving CSBG-funded services must have household income at or below 200% of the applicable federal poverty guideline and reside in the approved service area. Any exception to the standard eligibility requirements must be approved in writing by O.C.E.A.N., Inc. before the participant receives CSBG-funded services. The funded partner must verify eligibility using current O.C.E.A.N., Inc. and NJDCA requirements before or at enrollment and before services are provided. Supporting documentation must be retained in the participant file.

When a household reports zero income, the funded partner must follow the current O.C.E.A.N., Inc./NJDCA verification requirements. A zero-income statement alone is not sufficient.

5. Program and Reporting Expectations

- Deliver the approved program at the approved location(s) and within the contract period.
- Serve the contracted number of unduplicated individuals and, when applicable, unduplicated households.
- Collect required participant demographics, eligibility documentation, consent forms, services, and outcomes.
- Maintain complete and timely data in EmpowOR or provide the required records for entry, as directed by O.C.E.A.N., Inc.
- Notify O.C.E.A.N., Inc. promptly of material changes to staffing, locations, service delivery, targets, and/or budget.
- Participate in site visits, desk reviews, monitoring, corrective action, and technical assistance.
- Retain financial, program, and participant records for the period specified in the final agreement and applicable O.C.E.A.N., Inc., NJDCA, State, and federal requirements.
- Protect personally identifiable information by limiting access to authorized personnel, securely maintaining paper and electronic records, and promptly notifying O.C.E.A.N., Inc. of any suspected loss, unauthorized disclosure, or security incident involving participant information.

6. Monthly Reimbursement Package

Each reimbursement request must include, as applicable:

- Completed invoice cover sheet.
- Completed Supporting Docs Checklist
- Current Budget vs. Actual report.
- Program-specific general ledger (GL).
- Program-specific cash disbursement ledger (CDL), when required.
- Invoices, receipts, payroll records, mileage logs, attendance records, and other source documentation supporting each cost.
- Proof of payment, such as bank-cleared canceled checks, bank/ACH confirmations, payroll registers with supporting payment evidence, card statements, or approved petty cash logs.
- Monthly EmpowOR/program report and any required participant or service documentation.
- Explanation and allocation methodology for shared costs or costs benefiting more than one funding source.
- Reimbursement packages should be submitted by the last day of each reporting month and must be received no later than the fourth calendar day of the following month. Complete and approved reimbursement requests may take up to 45 days to process. The processing period begins after the complete package has been reviewed and approved for payment.

Incomplete, illegible, unsupported, unallowable, or out-of-period expenses may be returned, reduced, delayed, or denied.

7. Application Timeline and Submission

RFP released	October 1, 2026
Applications due	October 30, 2026
Review period	November 2 nd – 13th
Anticipated award notice	December 1, 2026
Contract period	January 1-December 31, 2027
Submission method	[INSERT APPLICATION LINK]

Late or incomplete applications may be rejected. Applicants are responsible for confirming successful submission.

8. Review and Selection Criteria

Criterion	Points	Review focus
Community need and alignment with CSBG goals	20	Recent local evidence of need, service gaps, CSBG alignment, and avoidance of unnecessary duplication.
Program design, service delivery, and feasibility	20	Clear activities, service schedule, staffing approach, and operational feasibility.
Measurable outputs, outcomes, and realistic targets	15	Specific, measurable, achievable annual outputs and outcomes supported by the design and budget.
Organizational capacity, staffing, and partnerships	15	Relevant experience, qualified staffing, organizational stability, oversight, and effective partnerships.
Budget reasonableness and cost effectiveness	15	Costs are necessary, adequately justified, aligned with activities and targets, and cost effective.
Data, eligibility, fiscal, and compliance capacity	10	Reliable eligibility, record security, EmpowOR/data reporting, fiscal controls, and documentation practices.
Past performance with O.C.E.A.N., Inc., if applicable	5	For prior partners: achievement of targets, timely reporting, invoice quality, monitoring results, and resolution of corrective actions.
Total	100	