

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the Delta Entrepreneurship Network (as of 2/5/15)**

**QUESTION:** Can a support organization be a government agency that offers services to entrepreneurs at no cost?

**ANSWER:** If entrepreneurs can receive services at no cost and you are not a private business or paid consultant then you can be considered as an entrepreneurship support organization (ESO).

**QUESTION:** Can you explain the tiers for the entrepreneur support organizations?

**ANSWER:** The tiers are a guide to learn the entrepreneurial landscape in the Delta region. The tiers allow us to see the level of services throughout the region. We are looking at services provided, expansion of services, and knowledge of the ecosystem. The ESOs will be divided into tiers, but the primary evaluation piece will be on their interview and the highest evaluation scores will be chosen as fellows regardless of tier.

**QUESTION:** Is there some expectation of service providers working with entrepreneurs? Or are these two separate things happening at the same time?

**ANSWER:** Both will be attending New Orleans Entrepreneur Week. The two tracks are separate; the ESO application process is different than the entrepreneur application process. In building a network, we want to make sure that we are connecting entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship support organizations with each other. Some ESOs and some entrepreneurs may not know what resources are out there. They will be working together and participating in what seminars and programming at New Orleans entrepreneur week together.

**QUESTION:** What about inventor ideas that need help with patenting? Do they qualify under this program?

**ANSWER:** The idea would have to be significantly developed and within the eligibility requirements. We aren't offering specific services to help you get a patent and we can't guarantee that it would be a part of New Orleans Entrepreneur Week, but the hope is that if you are connected with the entrepreneurship support organizations, then they will help you get to that next step.

**QUESTION:** Can more than one person in the support organization participate in the interview?

**ANSWER:** We can only send one representative from each entrepreneurship support organization as a fellow. If you feel that to adequately articulate what your support organization is doing you need more than one individual in your interview, you can have more than one individual in the interview.

**QUESTION:** What type of information will be covered at New Orleans Entrepreneur Week that will be useful to entrepreneur support organizations? This will be necessary and helpful in addressing what ESOs plan to take away from the New Orleans experience, correct?

**ANSWER:** New Orleans Entrepreneur Week's official agenda will be announced February 23rd. You can see what specific seminars are going to be held then. What we really want to know in the interview is: How you are going to maximize this experience? How you are going to maximize the relationships that you build with other support organizations and with entrepreneurs? What is it going to drive you to do in your local communities? So really, why do you want to go? Why is it important that we choose you over someone else?

**QUESTION:** Will entrepreneur fellows have the opportunity to pitch to a panel of potential investors in New Orleans?

**ANSWER:** That is correct. The entrepreneurs will be showcasing their ideas to a panel of investors during New Orleans Entrepreneur Week.

**QUESTION:** Is an organization organized as a state-based organization still be eligible?

**ANSWER:** An ESO can be organized as a state-based organization or an individual. Individuals are encouraged to apply as support organizations as long as they are providing free programming to entrepreneurs.

**QUESTION:** As a support organization may we attend the Delta Challenge Pitch Competitions as observers?

**ANSWER:** Yes, we encourage you to attend.

**QUESTION:** Is there a word or character limit for questions in the support organization application? Is there a word limit on the support organization application?

**ANSWER:** The entrepreneur application there is a 300 word limit. The ESO application will accept an unlimited number of characters.

**QUESTION:** Can another staff member from an ESO attend NOEW (at the ESO's expense)? May that staff member follow the same track as the DRA ESO fellows?

**ANSWER:** Yes, multiple staff from an organization are welcome to attend NOEW. The DRA Track is limited to DRA ESO fellows. We expect other tracks to overlap with the DRA track, however keep in mind that specific sessions will only be for the DRA ESO fellows.

**QUESTION:** What efforts are being made to support youth entrepreneurs and are their focused resources for youth entrepreneurs?

**ANSWER:** Youth entrepreneurs are encouraged to apply if they meet the qualifications. Although there are currently no distinct resources for youth entrepreneurs, our network will help identify the resources that support youth entrepreneurship.

**QUESTION:** What are the application deadlines?

**ANSWER:** Entrepreneur Support Organization (ESO) deadline is February 15<sup>th</sup> at midnight. Entrepreneurs must sign up and submit the business summary 24 hours before the day of competition. Please note, entrepreneurs can sign up for as many of the competitions as they want.

**QUESTION:** May a federal government agency apply as an Entrepreneurship Support Organization?

**ANSWER:** Yes, they can apply as a support organization if they provide free programming to entrepreneurs.

**QUESTION:** Can the business be organized as a sole proprietorship? Does the entrepreneur need to be incorporated in some form i.e. LLC, INC. CORP, etc.?

**ANSWER:** Yes, you can be organized as a sole proprietorship. The eligibility requirement only specifies that the business is organized as a for-profit.

**QUESTION:** Will there be ongoing mentorship to help organizations grow their local initiatives past the NOEW? Please explain.

**ANSWER:** Yes, we will provide additional programming post-NOEW. Site-visits, workshops, and a forum to ensure that we are connecting entrepreneurs and support organizations. This additional programming is not only for the fellows that attend NOEW but also so that entrepreneurs and support organizations have access to resources in their areas within the DRA region.

**QUESTION:** Are there any known federal grant opportunities to help local initiatives beyond the Delta Entrepreneur Network?

**ANSWER:** As the Delta Entrepreneur Network develops we will be posting resources and federal state and local funding opportunities on the website. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to hear about the latest resources available.

**QUESTION:** How are the award funds going to be handled? Will they be provided before travel or reimbursement?

**ANSWER:** Hotel accommodations, which is part of the award, will be paid for ahead of time. Travel expenses will be reimbursed. Specific guidelines will be given to successful fellows after March 4<sup>th</sup>.

**QUESTION:** During the entrepreneur 3 minute pitch will we be allowed to use notes?

**ANSWER:** Yes, entrepreneurs can use notes. Also, audio and visual equipment will be available if you would like to incorporate presentation technology (i.e. Power-point, Prezi) into your pitch.

**QUESTION:** What can you tell us about the showcase in NO? Will this be an actual investor pitch or more of a networking opportunity?

**ANSWER:** Both-Entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to pitch to investors and the opportunity to network with ESOs, mentors, and entrepreneurs in the New Orleans area.

**QUESTION:** If ESO serves entrepreneurs in DRA region, but is not located in DRA counties, may it be eligible to apply for the network fellowship?

**ANSWER:** You are eligible if you can prove that you are providing support services to entrepreneurs in DRA counties or parishes.

**QUESTION:** If an entrepreneur is applying/registering for the pitch competition can he or she also apply for that nonprofit to be considered as an ESO?

**ANSWER:** Yes, if you are working for an organization and have a side project as an entrepreneur you can apply for both. It would be advantageous to look at other individuals that you work with to represent your support organization in order to take advantage of both opportunities. There are different tracks for entrepreneurs and support organizations

**QUESTION:** Should the pitch follow the application or should it be around other aspects of the business?

**ANSWER:** The pitch should follow the application model. The judging rubric is based on the categories and supporting questions identified in the application. If you have additional time, other aspects of the business can be highlighted as well.

\*Any additional questions should be directed to Katie Milligan at [deltachallenge@dra.gov](mailto:deltachallenge@dra.gov) or reference [DRA.gov/entrepreneur](http://DRA.gov/entrepreneur) for more information about the Delta Entrepreneur Network.