

261—108.3(15) Program description, application procedures, and delegation of functions.

108.3(1) *Description.* The program provides technical assistance and financial assistance for the expansion of applied research and support for an MEP. All awards of financial assistance must be approved by the board, after submission of a proposal by the applicant and a recommendation on the proposal by the committee.

a. The applied research component makes financial assistance available to innovative businesses to connect university research to the innovative businesses' needs and to accelerate the transfer of new technologies to the marketplace. The authority may award financial assistance to university researchers who are attempting to align their research with market and industrial needs by forming partnerships with innovative businesses. Financial assistance under this component may take the form of grant funds. If grant funds are awarded, the applicant shall be required to match the amount of grant funds with other moneys at a ratio of one to one. Applicants may submit applications to the authority for assistance under this component. Such applications should describe in detail what activities the applicant will engage in to accelerate the validation of technology for the marketplace.

b. The MEP component makes financial assistance available to service providers that form partnerships with innovative businesses to conduct workshops for the purpose of providing assistance in determining and prioritizing applied research needs based on gaps in productivity or product needs and that offer to broker connections between innovative businesses and the researchers who can perform the necessary applied research. Financial assistance is also available to innovative businesses under this component for product development, design verification, custom equipment development, manufacturing process development, and technology development and commercialization. The authority will award financial assistance to eligible innovative businesses. Applicants may submit applications to the authority for assistance under this component. Such applications should describe in detail the nature of the partnerships being formed, what activities the partnership will undertake, and how such activities will further the goals of this component. Applicants must submit applications for assistance under this component and must describe in detail how the proposed services will expand the applicant's market penetration, create a new product with market relevance, or enhance an existing product by further innovation.

108.3(2) *Application and award procedures.* Applicants to the program may submit applications to the authority for financial assistance. To be eligible, an applicant must meet the requirements of one of the components described in subrule 108.3(2). Authority staff will review applications to confirm program eligibility before sending them to the committee for a recommendation on funding. The committee will provide its recommendation to the board for a final determination on the provision of financial assistance. The board may approve, deny, or defer each application for financial assistance under the program. The board will consider applications for financial assistance on a first-come, first-served basis. If the board approves funding for a business, the authority will prepare a required contract specifying the terms and conditions under which the financial assistance is to be provided to the business.

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