

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
CO.STARTERS Program Facilitator
Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA)
Issued: December 4, 2025
Due: January 5, 2025

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Summary

The Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) is seeking qualified candidates to serve as Facilitators for the [CO.STARTERS Core Program](#), an intensive, cohort-based entrepreneurship development program designed to equip local entrepreneurs with the tools, mindset, and support network necessary for success. Small business growth is essential to long-term economic resilience in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom, and entrepreneurship plays a critical role in creating stable jobs, diversifying the local economy, fostering community pride, and generating sustainable economic opportunity. NVDA, together with Do North Coworking, has helped deliver several successful cohorts of the CO.STARTERS program in recent years. To further expand this impact, NVDA and Do North Coworking are again partnering with CO.STARTERS, a globally recognized entrepreneurship support model, to offer programming that helps founders test assumptions, refine business models, and build strong foundations for new or growing ventures.

NVDA is currently seeking experienced, community-minded business owners or entrepreneurial leaders to serve as trained facilitators for upcoming CO.STARTERS cohorts in multiple locations throughout Vermont's Northeast Kingdom.

Program Background

The **CO.STARTERS Core Program** is a three-month, cohort-based experience where 10–16 entrepreneurs meet weekly for ten facilitated sessions. The program emphasizes:

- Collaborative learning and problem-solving
- Real-time business model testing using the CO.STARTERS Canvas
- Peer accountability and shared learning
- Action-focused steps to move entrepreneurs forward
- Simplified, accessible business concepts for new and existing founders

Each cohort meets one evening per week for three hours. Sessions include discussions, guest speakers, hands-on activities, and iterative exercises on venture development.

CO.STARTERS facilitators do not “teach” content. Instead, they:

- Guide discussions
- Ask strategic questions
- Draw insights from participant experience
- Use local connections and resources to support founders
- Create a safe, collaborative, productive environment

Facilitators must complete CO.STARTERS' required training and certification process, provided by CO.STARTERS.

Scope of Work

Facilitators selected through this RFQ will be responsible for:

Program Delivery

- Lead all **10 program sessions** (3 hours each) for one or more cohorts.
- Guide discussion-based learning using the CO.STARTERS curriculum.
- Maintain an inclusive, respectful, encouraging environment.

Entrepreneur Support

- Help participants test assumptions and refine their business models.
- Ask questions that foster clarity, creative solutions, and next steps.
- Direct participants to relevant local resources and networks.

Program Coordination

- Communicate regularly with NVDA staff.
- Work with NVDA staff to identify and coordinate guest speakers.
- Track participant engagement and identify support needs.
- Attend facilitator training and adhere to CO.STARTERS methodology.

Community Building

- Foster a strong peer network within the cohort.
- Promote collaboration and collective problem-solving.

Desired Qualifications:

Ideal candidates will have:

- Experience starting, owning, or operating a business.
- Strong knowledge of the local business and entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- Strong facilitation, communication, and group engagement skills.
- Ability to create a supportive and motivating environment.
- Commitment to community building and helping others succeed.
- Availability to attend required facilitator training.
- Strong local connections and willingness to engage community partners.

Previous facilitation experience is welcome but not required.

Time Commitment & Compensation:

- Training: CO.STARTERS facilitator training (time and format to be confirmed).
- Program Sessions: 10 weekly sessions (3 hours each, plus prep time):
 - The first cohort will be hosted at **Do North Coworking in Lyndon on Tuesday evenings, from 5:30 pm- 8 pm, February 3 – April 7, 2026.**
- Outside support for program participants throughout the 10-week program: as needed (up to 5 hours per week).
- Compensation: \$6,000 stipend.
- Additional cohorts, along with other facilitation opportunities, including a 2-day boot camp version of CO.STARTERS and relevant trainings and workshops, may be offered based on performance and availability.

Submission Requirements:

Interested individuals must submit the following as a single PDF by 5:00 pm on January 5, 2026:

1. **Letter of Interest** outlining:
 - Why you are interested in serving as a facilitator
 - Relevant entrepreneurial or business experience
 - Community involvement and/or local connections
2. **Resume or Professional Summary**
3. **Two References** who can speak to your leadership, facilitation, or business experience
4. **Availability** for training and program delivery

Submit materials to:

Annie McLean
Community and Economic Development Coordinator
Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA)
amclean@nvda.net

All information submitted becomes property of NVDA upon submission. NVDA reserves the right to issue supplemental information or guidelines relating to the RFQ as well as make modifications to the RFP or withdraw the RFP. NVDA reserves the right to reject any and all submissions received as a result of this solicitation, to negotiate with any qualified source, to waive any formality and any technicalities or to cancel the RFQ in part or in its entirety if it is in the best interest of NVDA. This solicitation of proposals in no way obligates NVDA to award a contract.

Evaluation Criteria

Responses will be evaluated based on:

- Relevant entrepreneurial experience
- Demonstrated facilitation or leadership skills
- Understanding of local business challenges
- Commitment to community-building
- Availability for training and program date

NVDA reserves the right to interview candidates before final selection.

Contract Requirements

NVDA will negotiate contract terms upon selection. All contracts are subject to review by NVDA's legal counsel. The contract shall not start until the successful applicant enters into a written contract with NVDA. NVDA is not liable for any cost incurred by consultant prior to issuance of a contract. The consultant must comply with all State and Federal covenants required by virtue of the funding source or contained or referenced in all NVDA's subcontracts including, but not limited to the following provisions:

- Insurance Coverage
- Indemnification
- Workers Compensation
- Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Disadvantage Business Enterprise (DBE) Obligation
- Audit and Record Retention
- Lobbying restrictions

Contact for Questions:

For additional information or clarification regarding this RFQ, contact:

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