



# North Carolina Selectsite Readiness Program

S.L. 2025-26 version

**Proposed July 2025**

These guidelines apply only to the  
appropriations and statutory  
language in S.L. 2025-26.

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## ***BACKGROUND***

In the 2023-24 budget legislation, the General Assembly enacted the Selectsite Readiness Program to complement the Megasites Readiness Program. The purposes of this program are the same as the Megasites Readiness Program except that the sites under the SRP are to be less than 1,000 acres yet still capable of handling major advanced manufacturing projects. The General Assembly indicated that up to fifteen (15) sites should be identified for preferred development and marketing, specifying that at least two sites must be under 100 acres and another seven sites must be under 500 acres

The purposes of the program are:

1. Assist local governments or a partnership of local governments in the acquisition of a selectsite
2. Support local governments/partnerships in efforts to analyze, plan, install, and/or upgrade eligible infrastructure that would make the site more attractive and accessible to potential employers
3. Support local governments/partnerships in certain site preparation costs, such as clearing and grading
4. Assist local governments/partnerships with the costs of due diligence activities
5. Facilitate coordination of economic development agencies, the Department of Environmental Quality, and the Department of Transportation

## ***ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS TO DATE***

For 2023-24, the General Assembly provided that unspent funds previously appropriated but unspent by the EDPNC for the first purpose listed above, the identification and evaluation of sites for preferred development and marketing for the SRP. The law required that the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC) engage a national site selection firm through a competitive process to produce a report evaluating sites and determining the fifteen sites best positioned for advanced manufacturing site selection searches conducted by major employers

The EDPNC designed a request for proposals and broadly made the request available to qualified firms with experience representing major manufacturing projects and advising economic development agencies on site readiness across the nation. The EDPNC received several proposals and interviewed several bidders. EDPNC staff, statewide partners, (board members) participated in the interviews.

A team including the Site Selection Group and Thomas and Hutton were selected to conduct the identification and analysis. This effort resulted in a summer 2024 report found [here](#). The team identified fifteen sites out of a total of 64 submissions as the best positioned for advanced manufacturing site selection searches. These sites are located in fourteen different counties.

The [report](#) contains detail on the scope, methodology, and description of the sites – including some order of magnitude cost estimates totaling \$235 million. Some of these sites are privately owned, some are publicly owned, and some have an option to buy from a local partner. All these sites are currently marketed to economic development projects.

The General Assembly appropriated \$10 million for the purposes of supporting due diligence costs for these fifteen sites for the 2024-25 fiscal year.

The EDPNC Board has awarded eight (8) grants totaling \$2.4 million for due diligence costs.

### ***EFFECTS OF S.L. 2025-4 (ENACTED MAY 2025) ON THE PROGRAM***

The effects of the May 2025 amendments to the Program include:

- A requirement that the EDPNC engage a site selection firm through a competitive bid process to identify between three to five selectsites in counties declared by the President of the United States to be major disaster areas. There are 25 such counties and the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians.
- The broadening of eligible expenses from due diligence expenses only to include costs related to site acquisition; design, planning and installation of eligible infrastructure, and on-site preparation.
- The broadening of the definition of partnerships of local governments to include 501c12 organizations as eligible partners of one or more local governments.
- The broadening of eligible infrastructure to include certain non-publicly owned infrastructure, namely that owned by 501c12 organizations.
- The broadening of eligible infrastructure from “electrical utility lines” to “electric infrastructure” necessary to meet the needs of prospective industrial customers.

### ***EFFECTS OF S.L. 2025-26 (ENACTED JUNE 2025) ON THE PROGRAM***

The effects of the June 2025 amendments include:

- An appropriation of \$15 million for the 2025-26 fiscal year to the Selectsite Fund
- The appropriation must be used for:
  - The purposes consistent with the Selectsite Fund as amended in May 2025
  - Costs for other public infrastructure and site development costs at a site other than a selectsite that are needed to facilitate an economic development project on a selectsite

### ***Scope of Guidelines***

These Guidelines apply to the funds appropriated by the General Assembly to the Selectsites Readiness Fund (“Fund”) for use by the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC) for the \$15 million appropriated by the General Assembly for the 2025-26 fiscal year in Section 2A.6 of S.L. 2025-26. They are designed to provide internal direction and guidance to EDPNC officials responsible for the administration of the Fund.

### ***Comment Period on Guidelines***

These Guidelines have been published on **Wednesday, July 2, 2025**. EDPNC will receive comment on these guidelines for 20 days. The EDPNC may consider modifications to the guidelines based on comments, but there is no requirement that the EDPNC make any changes. The Guidelines are NOT effective until after the comment period.

### ***Eligible Applicants***

There are several conditions for grants to be awarded from funds appropriated to the Program.<sup>v</sup> These include:

- An application provided by the EDPNC for the Program must be completed by a Principal Applicant (“Applicant”).
- Applicant must be a local government or government partnership. A government partnership under these Guidelines is defined as either (1) a North Carolina nonprofit entity that is tax exempt under section 501c3 or section 501c12 of the Internal Revenue Code in partnership with one or more local governments or (2) a group of local governments
- Applicant must be in an active competition for an economic development project involving a manufacturer. The Chair of the Board and the Chief Executive Officer of the EDPNC shall certify the active and competitive nature of the project.
- Applicant must assume responsibility for grant funds provided for public infrastructure and site development improvements on a site that is not a selectsite
- Applicant must be seeking a grant related to a Selectsite (“Selectsite”) as defined by S.L. 2023-134 or a site identified from the process required by Section 4.3(a) of S.L. 2025-4.
- Applicant must either a) own the property or b) have a sales contract or option agreement to purchase the property. An option on the property must be valid for at least five years after a grant award is made, unless there is a verifiable competitive economic development project that seeks to make a decision to expand or locate to the Applicant’s site immediately.
- Applicant must demonstrate that the property is zoned or rezoned as suitable for economic development.

### ***Eligible Purposes***

Applicants must demonstrate and certify that Funds will be used for one or more of the following purposes:

1. The acquisition of a Selectsite
2. The analysis, planning, installation, or upgrading of eligible infrastructure, including eligible water, gas, and sewer systems, transportation infrastructure, and the electric infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of prospective employers
3. On-site preparation, including clearing, grading, or other related expenses for Selectsites
4. Due diligence costs
5. **Other public infrastructure located on a site that is not a Selectsite**
6. **Site development improvements located on a site that is not a Selectsite**

In the case of (5) and (6), the Applicant must demonstrate that the funds made for these purposes are necessary to successfully land an economic development project.

*Note: Applicants may request funding for each of the eligible purposes in a single grant application.*

### ***Purpose 1: Site Acquisition***

#### ***Eligibility for Site Acquisition Funds***

The Program may provide funds for acquisition of a site by the Applicant.

In order to receive any funding from this program for site acquisition, the Applicant must:

- Have a binding option or offer to purchase
- Have completed all basic due diligence, including, but not limited to, boundary surveys, title searches, State Historic Preservation Office reviews, and wetlands delineation<sup>vi</sup>
- Demonstrate the funds available and willingness to pay for the balance of the acquisition cost of the Selectsite.

The maximum amount that will be awarded for this purpose is the lesser of 85 percent of:

1. The purchase price of the property, or
2. The tax value of the property

### ***Purpose 2: Eligible Infrastructure***

The Program may also provide grant monies for eligible infrastructure to meet the needs of prospective employers for Selectsites. Onsite infrastructure may only be considered if the Applicant owns the Selectsite.

Eligible public infrastructure expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Upgrade of water, wastewater, stormwater, roads, highways, bridges, gas infrastructure, electric infrastructure owned by a governmental entity, a 501c3 nonprofit organization, or a 501c12 nonprofit organization.
- Installation and/or construction of water, wastewater, stormwater, roads, highways, bridges, gas infrastructure, electric infrastructure owned by a governmental entity, a 501c3 nonprofit organization, or a 501c12 nonprofit organization.

For information purposes, the expenses below are included as part of Purpose 4 below:

- Preliminary engineering reports for water and wastewater treatment to the site
- Assessments related to road and highway infrastructure to serve the site
- Assessments related to publicly owned gas and electric infrastructure to serve the site

### ***Purpose 3: Onsite Preparation***

In order to be eligible for a grant for onsite preparation, an eligible Applicant must own the land on which the activities funded by the grant are performed.

Onsite preparation costs eligible for reimbursement/funding under the Program include, but are not limited to:

- clearing of the site
- grading of the site
- other related expenses, as deemed eligible by the EDPNC

#### ***Purpose 4: Due Diligence***

Due diligence expenses are already covered by previous Guidelines found [here](#). Applicants may contact the EDPNC with questions about these expenses.

#### ***Purpose 5: Other Public Infrastructure***

Expenses related to any infrastructure owned or maintained by a public entity, including but not limited to a unit of local government, a public authority with the majority of appointees of its governing board from governing boards of units of local governments, an agency of state government, or its subdivisions.

#### ***Purpose 6: Site Development Costs***

This includes the same categories of expense as Purpose 3 but are for a site that is not a Selectsite.

#### ***Grant Application and Award Process***

The application shall be completed and submitted online in the form required by the EDPNC.

Given the eligibility requirements, the EDPNC may choose to have more than one filing deadline for applications to allow time for potential Applicants to take the steps necessary to meet the criteria. Eligible entities will be notified in advance of application periods. Nothing herein binds the EDPNC to more than one application deadline.

Expenses that meet all other criteria for eligibility and are incurred and documented after the execution of a grant agreement, may be supported by this program at the discretion of the EDPNC.

In determining the actual amount of the grant, the EDPNC will also consider:

- the total development needs for the Selectsite,
- prior investment in the Selectsite by the Applicant,
- the number of jobs and amount of capital investment that the pending economic development project commits to provide,
- the necessity of the grant to meet the needs of the project;
- the ability of the Applicant to invest in the Selectsite, and
- the ability and level of participation promised by the Applicant in exchange for a grant from the Fund.

Upon receipt and verification of a complete (all required documents and attachments received) application, the EDPNC staff and consultants **may**:

- Conduct virtual and/or in-person site visits to verify and conduct further evaluation.
- Evaluate the grant applications, using the criteria enumerated in these Guidelines.
- Recommend grant approval, partial approval, or denial to a subcommittee of the Board of Directors (“Board”) appointed for this purpose by the Chair of the Board.

- If approved by the subcommittee, present to the Board with a proposed agreement that includes appropriate performance criteria, remedies, and other safeguards to ready the Selectsite for a major employer and recapture a proportionate amount of assistance for failure to perform<sup>viii</sup>

### ***Performance Assurance***

The grantee must allow the EDPNC, or its agents, access to all records necessary to protect the state's interest in the funds and, as appropriate, to require return of funds in cases of failure to comply with the performance agreements negotiated between the parties.

In the case that a grant involves a current competitive economic development project, the EDPNC shall require evidence of a binding agreement between the company and the Applicant as to conditions to be met for release of funds. For grants intended to benefit a prospective company, the EDPNC may, in their sole discretion, require that the Applicant enter into an agreement with the company ensuring the appropriate safeguards of funds in the form acceptable to the EDPNC. These safeguards will include the requirement that the company repay a proportionate amount of funds in the event the job creation or investment targets upon which the project was based are not met.

### ***Consistency***

The general procedure outlined in these Guidelines is intended to be applied consistently to all Applicants.

### ***Disbursement of Funds***

Funds shall be provided by the EDPNC to grantees as described in an Agreement.

### ***Maximum Grant***

It is expected that a maximum grant under these guidelines would be up to the amount appropriated by the General Assembly. The EDPNC may approve one grant for the entire amount.

### ***Other Considerations***

To the extent the General Assembly's allocation of moneys to the Fund directs a use or process different than those set out in these Guidelines, the General Assembly's direction controls and supersedes these Guidelines.

The grantee must submit reports in a form provided by the EDPNC at least annually to the EDPNC, or at more regular intervals as included in the Agreement. Failure to comply with reporting requirements may be cause for withholding grant distributions.

All grants are subject to the availability of funds. Nothing in these Guidelines shall be construed to create any right to funds by any entity.

### ***EDPNC Contact:***

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