

Notice of Funding Opportunity:

RoboBench: Shared Infrastructure for Commercialization Readiness

NOFO No. 2026-JAII-04

Massachusetts Technology Collaborative
75 North Drive
Westborough, MA 01581-3340
<http://www.masstech.org>

Procurement Team Leader:
NOFO Issued:
Responses Due:

Raagini Rameshwar, PhD, Robotics Program Manager
January 16, 2026
February 19, 2026

1. Introduction

The Robotics Initiative at the Innovation Institute is issuing this Notice of Funding Opportunity for *RoboBench: Shared Infrastructure for Commercialization Readiness* (“RoboBench”), a program which aims to increase access to robotics-related infrastructure across the Commonwealth and support the robotics entrepreneurial ecosystem. The Innovation Institute will grant capital awards on a competitive basis to support robotics-related nonprofit entities and public or private institutions of higher education to enhance their shared facilities and enable cross-sector robotics commercialization. This NOFO seeks to provide capital grant funding to proposals to either build on existing infrastructure or develop new facilities to increase access to vital resources for commercializing robotic hardware.

Mass Tech Collaborative will be the contracting entity on behalf of the Innovation Institute for the purposes of this NOFO, and (except where the specific context warrants otherwise), the Innovation Institute and Mass Tech Collaborative are collectively referred to as Mass Tech Collaborative or MassTech. Mass Tech Collaborative will enter into a **Capital Matching Grant Agreement** with selected Respondents containing certain standard provisions (the “Agreement”), located [HERE](#).

About the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (Mass Tech Collaborative)

Mass Tech Collaborative is an independent public instrumentality of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts chartered by the Commonwealth to serve as a catalyst for growing its innovation economy. Mass Tech Collaborative brings together leaders from industry, academia, and government to advance technology-focused solutions that lead to economic growth, job creation, and public benefits in Massachusetts. For additional information about Mass Tech Collaborative and its programs and initiatives, please visit our website at www.masstech.org.

Established in 2004 as a division of Mass Tech Collaborative, the Innovation Institute works to support key industry clusters and to improve conditions for growth in the Commonwealth’s Innovation Economy. The ‘Innovation Economy’ can be described as the economy that transforms knowledge into new ideas, ways or patterns of thinking, products, processes and services that fuel economic growth, create employment and wealth, and generate significant improvements in the region’s standard of living. The Innovation Institute provides targeted, expert services, often accompanied by investments, to support the growth and enhance the competitiveness of key industry clusters in the Commonwealth’s knowledge economy. For more information about the Innovation Institute and its activities and investments, please visit the website at www.masstech.org/innovation-institute.

2. Program Framework

Overview of the Massachusetts Robotics Ecosystem

Massachusetts is a national leader in robotics innovation, hosting more than 400 robotics companies, more than 70 dedicated R&D labs, and a strong network of academic and industry leaders. This thriving ecosystem, enriched by a vibrant start-up community, forms the backbone of the Commonwealth’s robotics sector. However, further steps are needed to accelerate robotic

commercialization, particularly for early-stage startups and labs, to secure Massachusetts' leadership and expand access statewide. For more information about the Massachusetts Robotics Ecosystem, please see [From Innovation to Integration](#), an ecosystem report published by MassTech

Program Goals

RoboBench aims to strengthen the robotics innovation ecosystem by supporting the development of shared infrastructure, led by organizations that support startups and/or research labs commercializing robotics hardware. These organizations, such as nonprofit incubators, public and private institutions, makerspaces, and others provide access to critical resources that small robotics developers often cannot afford independently. This is especially true of commercialization resources that robotics developers need to grow their Technology Readiness Level (TRL) from the prototyping stage (TRL 4-6) to the pilot-scale stage (TRL 7-9).

This NOFO seeks to increase access to robotics commercialization resources, such as manufacturing facilities and testing platforms, across the Commonwealth. This program aims to support the expansion of current facilities as well as the development of new resources in underserved regions or in areas not yet involved with robotics. The goal is to enable the robotics ecosystem to more effectively develop robotic systems for the real world, overcoming early funding hurdles during the commercialization process.

We are seeking proposals to develop ubiquitous shared infrastructure with a focus on cross-sector robotics capabilities.

Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must be a Massachusetts-based nonprofit entity, or public or private institution of higher education, supporting the commercialization of hardware-based robotic technologies. To be considered, applicants must demonstrate a genuine intent to support commercialization efforts, as well as a genuine collaboration with key industry partners.

Applicants must also present a strong case for developing in-house infrastructure that will benefit the robotics groups they support.

Funding

MassTech expects to make multiple capital grant awards that range from \$250,000 to \$2,000,000. All expenditures to be funded by the Mass Tech Collaborative under this program must be accounted for by the recipient in its financial records as a capital expenditure under Generally Accepted Accounting Principles ("GAAP"). Furthermore, disbursement of funds on a reimbursement basis, from Mass Tech Collaborative will be contingent upon the submission of a signed form with each invoice that certifies specific expenditures submitted for funding are considered capital expenditures according to grantee's accounting policies and practices.

All Respondents must provide a 25% match of the requested funding, which can be in cash or in-kind.

It is expected that funds will be expensed over 12-24 months and used towards capital expenses such as: manufacturing equipment, testing equipment, and renovating underused spaces.

See Section 5 for additional information regarding disbursement of funds, use of funds, and mandatory match requirements.

3. Evaluation Guidelines

The Innovation Institute is soliciting applications in two stages – a concept paper and a full application. Concept papers (up to 10 pages) will be reviewed under the following criteria, and select applicants will be invited to submit a full application:

- Potential for economic impact
- Applicants' knowledge of the robotics ecosystem and its needs
- Viability of the proposed project

Full applications (up to 25 pages) will be reviewed with the following criteria in mind:

- Applicant's knowledge of the robotics ecosystem and its needs
- Applicant's ability to execute on the proposed project
- Direct economic impacts
- Industry support and collaboration
- Long-term sustainability of the proposed infrastructure
- Regional impact beyond traditional innovation centers

4. Application process

4.1 Application and Submission Instructions

Respondents are cautioned to read this NOFO carefully and to conform to its requirements. Failure to comply with the requirements of this NOFO may serve as grounds for rejection of an Application.

Applications must be delivered electronically to proposals@masstech.org and rameshwar@masstech.org (please include the NOFO number in the subject heading).

The RoboBench application process will be administered in two phases. Applicants will first submit a concise concept paper that outlines their proposed initiative and its potential to advance regional innovation and economic growth. Finalists will be invited to submit a full application to expand upon details of their proposed project. Successful applicants will be required to execute a Capital Matching Grant Agreement, which can be found [HERE](#).

All Concept Papers (up to 10 pages) must include the items listed below:

- Application Cover Sheet ([Attachment A](#))
- Application, which shall include:
 - Introduction
 - A description of the entity responding to the NOFO (including descriptions of proposed subcontractors and/or partners, if any) and the entity's qualifications to perform the project.
 - Project Description

- A high-level overview of currently available resources, a summary of the robotics developers supported (number, sectors, etc.), and a description of the unmet need the proposal aims to address.
 - An overview of the proposed project.
 - Timeline and Budget
 - A high-level timeline and a set of concrete deliverables or key milestones to achieve the project's objectives.
 - A high-level description of the project's capital budget outlining key budgetary categories and associated timelines.
 - Partnerships
 - A description of the project partners and key stakeholders and their involvement with the proposed project.
 - A description of the cash and/or in-kind contributions to the project that equals or exceeds twenty-five percent (25%) of the grant award to be provided by this program.
 - Anticipated Economic Impact
 - An outline of the desired economic impact of the proposed infrastructure.
- Required Documentation:
 - Authorized Application Signature and Acceptance Form ([Attachment B](#)).

All Full Applications (up to 25 pages) must include the items listed below:

- Application Cover Sheet ([Attachment A](#))
- Application, which shall include:
 - Introduction
 - A description of the entity responding to the NOFO (including descriptions of proposed subcontractors and/or partners, if any), its charter, leadership team, and the entity's qualifications to perform the project.
 - An in-depth description of the ecosystem need (an expanded survey of current facilities, needs of the supported robotics groups, business cases if available, etc.)
 - Project Description
 - A detailed project description highlighting the project's goals, activities, and anticipated impact on the robotics sector in Massachusetts.
 - A plan for long-term sustainability of the proposed infrastructure (business plan, a timeline for seeking external funding, etc.)
 - Timeline and Budget
 - A timeline and a set of concrete deliverables or key milestones to achieve the project's objectives.
 - A high-level description of the project's capital budget outlining key budgetary categories and associated timelines.
 - Partnerships
 - A list of key partners and stakeholders,
 - A demonstrated commitment of cash and/or in-kind contributions to the project that equals or exceeds twenty-five percent (25%) of the grant award to be provided by this program.
 - Anticipated Economic Impact
 - An expanded description of anticipated economic impact
 - Desired metrics (# companies supported, usage statistics, etc.)

- Required Documentation:
 - Utilizing the Budget Template ([Attachment C](#)), provide the total not-to-exceed costs for the project based on projected hours, proposed hourly rates, and any other appropriate costs. List additional fees, overhead charges, or reimbursable expenses, if any.
 - Letters of support, if available
 - Authorized Application Signature and Acceptance Form ([Attachment B](#)).

4.1.1 Any and all responses, Applications, data, materials, information and documentation submitted to Mass Tech Collaborative in response to this NOFO shall become Mass Tech Collaborative’s property and shall be subject to public disclosure. As a public entity, the Mass Tech Collaborative is subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law (set forth at Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 66). There are very limited and narrow exceptions to disclosure under the Public Records Law. If a Respondent wishes to have the Mass Tech Collaborative treat certain information or documentation as confidential, the Respondent must submit a written request to the Mass Tech Collaborative’s General Counsel’s office no later than 5:00 p.m. five (5) business days prior to the required date of Application submission. The request must precisely identify the information and/or documentation that is the subject of the request and provide a detailed explanation supporting the application of the statutory exemption(s) from the public records cited by the Respondent. The General Counsel will issue a written determination within three (3) business days of receipt of the written request. If the General Counsel approves the request, the Respondent shall clearly label the relevant information and/or documentation as “**CONFIDENTIAL**” in the Application. Any statements in an Application reserving any confidentiality or privacy rights that is inconsistent with these requirements and procedures may be disregarded.

4.2 Application Timeframe

The application process will proceed according to the following schedule. The target dates are subject to change. Therefore, Respondents are encouraged to check Mass Tech Collaborative’s website frequently for updates to the schedule.

Task	Date:
NOFO Released	01/16/2026
Bidder’s Conference/Webinar	01/23/2026 @ 1PM EST
Questions Due	01/29/2026 @ 5 PM EST
Question and Answer File Posted	02/05/2026 @ 5 PM EST
Concept Paper Due	02/19/2026 @ 5 PM EST
Full Applications Due (if invited)	04/03/2026 @ 5 PM EST

4.3 Questions

Questions regarding this NOFO must be submitted by electronic mail to proposals@masstech.org and rameshwar@masstech.org with the following Subject Line: “Questions – NOFO No. 2026-JAI-

04"). Responses to all questions received will be posted on 02/05/2026 to Mass Tech Collaborative and COMMBUYS website(s). Pertinent information about this NOFO may be included in the Question and Answer file – Respondents are responsible for reviewing that file for any relevant additional information about this NOFO.

5. **DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS**

The Mass Tech Collaborative will disburse funds on a reimbursement basis in accordance with the budget, payment terms, schedules, and other terms and conditions established in the Capital Matching Grant Agreement. Among other conditions, payment will be subject to: (i) execution of an agreement between the grantee and each entity providing matching funds; (ii) receipt by the grantee of the applicable portion of the matching funding; (iii) submission of agreed upon deliverables, valid invoices, and supporting detail from the grantee evidencing the expenditures to be reimbursed, match funds recognized, and certifying to the capital nature of the expenditure; and (iv) Mass Tech Collaborative's access to sufficient bond funding from the Commonwealth.

Use of Proceeds

Expenditures to be funded by the Mass Tech Collaborative under this program must be ones that will be accounted for by the recipient in its financial records as a capital expenditure under Generally Accepted Accounting Principles ("GAAP"). Examples of such capital expenditures could include expenditures for the purchase of equipment and the development of new technology platforms or systems. Such capital expenditures may in certain projects also include salaries of staff directly engaged in managing capital projects to the extent such expenditures are capitalizable under GAAP. Salaries of individuals engaged in operations, as well as other non-personnel operating costs, are not capital expenditures.

Mandatory Cost Sharing/Match Requirements

A requirement for all awards will be additional, companion expenditures of awards by the Federal Government, universities, nonprofits, foundations, or corporations and/or cash and in-kind contributions that equal no less than twenty-five (25%) percent of the state investment through this NOFO. All contributions, including cash and in-kind contributions, will be accepted as part of the grant recipient's cost sharing requirement provided that such contributions meet all of the following criteria: (i) are necessary to accomplish the objectives of the collaborative project; (ii) are included in the approved budget for the collaborative project; (iii) are allocated separately for the Robotic Digital Twin Initiative award; (iv) are verifiable from recipient's records; and (v) are not included as matching contributions for any other federal or state-supported project. To the extent the Respondent's application deviates from these expectations, the Respondent must clearly describe and justify the proposed alternative approach. The Mass Tech Collaborative will evaluate the composition of the project team's cost share within the context of the project team's demonstrated commitment to the project and financial capacity.

6. General Conditions

6.1 General Information

- a. If an Application fails to meet any material terms, conditions, requirements or procedures, it may be deemed unresponsive and disqualified. The Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right to waive omissions or irregularities that it determines to be not material.
- b. This NOFO, as may be amended from time to time by Mass Tech Collaborative, does not commit Mass Tech Collaborative to select any firm(s), award any contracts for services pursuant to this NOFO, or pay any costs incurred in responding to this NOFO. Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to withdraw the NOFO, to engage in preliminary discussions with prospective Respondents, to accept or reject any or all Applications received, to request supplemental or clarifying information, to negotiate with any or all qualified Respondents, and to request modifications to Applications in accordance with negotiations.
- c. On matters related solely to this NOFO that arise prior to an award decision by the Mass Tech Collaborative, Respondents shall limit communications with the Mass Tech Collaborative to the Procurement Team Leader and such other individuals as the Mass Tech Collaborative may designate from time to time. No other Mass Tech Collaborative employee or representative is authorized to provide any information or respond to any questions or inquiries concerning this NOFO. Respondents may contact the Procurement Team Leader for this NOFO in the event this NOFO is incomplete.
- d. The Mass Tech Collaborative may provide reasonable accommodations, including the provision of materials in an alternative format, for Respondents with disabilities or other hardships. Respondents requiring accommodations shall submit requests in writing, with supporting documentation justifying the accommodations, to the Procurement Team Leader. The Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right to grant or reject any request for accommodations.
- e. Respondent's Application shall be treated by the Mass Tech Collaborative as an accurate statement of Respondent's capabilities and experience. Should any statement asserted by Respondent prove to be inaccurate or inconsistent with the foregoing, such inaccuracy or inconsistency shall constitute sufficient cause for Mass Tech Collaborative in its sole discretion to reject the Application and/or terminate of any resulting Agreement.
- f. Costs that are not specifically identified in the Respondent's response and/or not specifically accepted by Mass Tech Collaborative as part of the Agreement will not be compensated under any contract awarded pursuant to this NOFO.
- g. Mass Tech Collaborative's prior approval is required for any subcontracted services under any Agreement entered into as a result of this NOFO. The selected Respondent will take all appropriate steps to assure that minority firms, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are used when possible. The selected Respondent is responsible for the satisfactory performance and adequate oversight of its subcontractors. Subcontractors are

required to meet the same requirements and are held to the same reimbursable cost standards as the selected Respondent.

- h. Submitted responses must be valid in all respects for a minimum period of sixty (60) days after the deadline for submission.
- i. Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right to amend the Agreement at any time prior to execution. Respondents should review the Agreement as they are required to specify any exceptions to the Agreement and to make any suggested counterproposal in their Application. A failure to specify exceptions and/or counterproposals will be deemed an acceptance of the Agreement's general terms and conditions, and no subsequent negotiation of such provisions shall be permitted.

6.2 Posting of Modifications/Addenda to NOFO

This NOFO has been distributed electronically using the Mass Tech Collaborative and COMMBUYS websites. If the Mass Tech Collaborative determines that it is necessary to revise any part of this NOFO, or if additional data is necessary to clarify any of its provisions, an addendum will be posted to the websites. It is the responsibility of each potential Respondent to check the Mass Tech Collaborative and COMMBUYS websites for any addenda or modifications to the NOFO, including information contained in the Question and Answer file. The Mass Tech Collaborative accepts no liability and will provide no accommodation to Respondents who submit a response based on an out-of-date NOFO.

Attachment A**Application Cover Sheet**

Name of Respondent			
Mailing Address	City / Town	State	Zip Code
Telephone	Web Address		
Primary Contact for Clarification	Primary Contact Email Address		
Authorized Signatory	Authorized Signatory Email Address		
Legal Status / Jurisdiction (e.g. a Massachusetts Corporation, LLC, LLP, etc.)	Respondents UEI No.		

Attachment B**Massachusetts Technology Collaborative**
Authorized Respondent's Signature and Acceptance Form

The undersigned is a duly authorized representative of the Respondent listed below. The Respondent has read and understands the NOFO requirements. The Respondent acknowledges that all the terms and conditions of the NOFO are mandatory, and that Respondent's response is compliant with such requirements. The Respondent specifically acknowledges the application of the procedures regarding submission of information under the MA Public Records Law set forth in Section 4.1.1 of the NOFO, and specifically agrees that it shall be bound by those procedures.

Respondent agrees that the entire proposal will remain valid for sixty (60) days from receipt by MassTech.

I certify that Respondent is in compliance with all corporate filing requirements and state tax laws.

I further certify that the statements made in this response to the NOFO, including all attachments and exhibits, are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Respondent: _____
(Printed Name of Respondent)

By: _____
(Signature of Authorized Representative)

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Attachment C
Budget Template

SEE EXCEL SPREADSHEET [or insert appropriate budget]