



FY21 PATHWAYS TO SCALE

Grant Solicitation Q&A Document

Solicitation No. 2021-JAII-01

Proposal Content

How do you define “high-growth”?

The solicitation provides respondents the opportunity to define what “high-growth” means to their regional or industry ecosystems. As a guidepost, we provide the definition of a company of scale as one that:

- Has achieved sustainable competitive advantage through market validation
- Is generating significant sales revenue, and
- Has built internal infrastructure such that all typical functions of an established company (HR, marketing, distribution, etc.) exist.

The solicitation asks respondents to identify companies in their community with high-growth potential to become a company of scale. Ideal candidates for the proposed mentor programs meet the following criteria:

- Company has created a repeatable and scalable business model
- Company has demonstrated traction and achieved customer validation
- Founders and leadership team demonstrate willingness and ability to grow the company

Do you expect this to be run in a true cohort, or can the companies work with the mentors on a rolling basis?

Respondents will design the mentor program in a manner that best suits the needs of the scaling executives to be served by the program.

Do startups/mentors need to be in Massachusetts or benefit Massachusetts?

All startups and scaling companies supported by the proposed project must be located in Massachusetts. It is acceptable to recruit mentors from outside the state who have experience growing innovative companies to scale.

Do mentors have to be firms or can they be individuals?

It is expected that individuals who have demonstrated experience growing innovative companies to scale will serve as mentors.

Are there special considerations for programs that work with New Majority Founders (POC & Women)?

Mass Tech Collaborative will look favorably upon Respondents that can assist firms in addressing challenges represented by the COVID-19 crisis and those who include women and minority executives as priority targets for inclusion in their Project.

Applicant Eligibility

Can 2 non-profits submit a proposal as partners?

Yes.

Can a nonprofit or business incubator outside of Massachusetts partner with a Massachusetts-based incubator to apply?

The lead applicant must be a Massachusetts-based non-profit. Partnership with a non-profit outside of Massachusetts is acceptable as long as all startups and scaling companies supported by the proposed project are located in Massachusetts.

Why not include organizations that are not “non-profit?”

Given the limited pool of resources, the Pathways to Scale solicitation is only open to non-profits. Non-profit applicants can, however, have for-profit partners provided the non-profit is the lead applicant.

Is there a restriction on the size of the non-profit?

No.

Is the solicitation open to all types of non-profits or only 501 c 3s?

The solicitation is open to all types of non-profits.

Can an organization that has already received funding for the proposed project, or similar, from MassTech or another state agency apply to the Pathways to Scale solicitation?

Prior funding from MassTech or another state agency will be taken into consideration at the time of review but does not restrict the receiving organization from applying to the Pathways to Scale solicitation.

Can another quasi-public agency submit a proposal to the Pathways to Scale solicitation?

No.



Can a life sciences focused incubator submit a proposal to expand its existing mentor program?

Yes.

What is a typical number of applications you receive? How many do you expect?

Historically, we have received an average of 10 applications for similar solicitations. We expect a similar number of applications for the Pathways to Scale solicitation.

How many grants do you plan to award?

The number of grants awarded depends on the quality of the proposals received.

Application Requirements / Process

Do we need letters of support from participating mentors and scaling executives?

It is not required to include letters of support from mentors or scaling executives. However, letters can be useful to demonstrate commitment and potential for success.

Is there a defined period during which the funding must be deployed?

The applicant has flexibility to define their project period. Typical projects will span 12 – 18 months.

What are the project/grant reporting requirements?

The objective of reporting is to be able to absorb the learning, discovery, and insights acquired from the ecosystem practitioners. It helps us all be more targeted and intentional on how to best support scaling companies in Massachusetts. Reporting requirements will depend on the length and nature of the proposed project. A typical year-long project may have quarterly or semi-annual reporting along with a final report at project completion. MassTech can take a flexible approach to reporting and invoicing requirements to best meet the needs of grantees and project milestones.

What kind of metrics?

Applicants will define the metrics that best track the outcomes of their proposed projects. Quantitative metrics such as the number of companies served, number of mentors engaged, amount of capital raised, and number of jobs created by participating companies are an example of regularly tracked metrics. We also welcome grantees to share the success stories of participating companies that cannot necessarily be tracked quantitatively.

Will the slides from Q&A session be posted?

Yes. They can be found on the solicitation webpage. <https://innovation.masstech.org/fy21-pathways-scale-solicitation>

Use of Funds

What type of expenses are allowable through the Pathways to Scale grant?

Funding from the Pathways to Scale grant is intended to be used for programmatic support and operating expenses.

Can the grant be used to cover travel expenses?

Yes, to a reasonable extent (as determined by Mass Tech) and with appropriate documentation. For travel costs, if approved, Mass Tech pays the then-current IRS rate per mile.

Can mentors be paid?

Awarded funds from the Pathways to Scale grant cannot be used to pay mentors. It is allowable for grantees to supplement the proposed project with their own internal sources.

Can a portion of the funds be used to award money to startup participants?

Funds should primarily be used to cover programmatic and operating expenses of the support organization running the mentor program. On occasion, it may be appropriate to provide a monetary award to the winner of pitch competition conducted as part of the proposed program.

What about database creation?

Funds should primarily be used to cover programmatic and operating expenses of the support organization running the mentor program. It may be appropriate to use funds to update a database to better recruit, engage, and pair mentors with scaling executives.

Can funding be used to pay for trainings for startup companies?

Applicants will have to be specific about what type of trainings would supplement their proposed program and how it differs from what can be offered by 1:1 mentorship support and other growth support services.