



GRANT SOLICITATION

FY21 Pathways to Scale Solicitation

Solicitation No. 2021-JAII-01

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

Solicitation Issued: February 16, 2021

Team Leader: Megan Marszalek

Updated- Applications Due: April 20, 2021 by 3PM EST

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The Innovation Institute, a division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative ("Mass Tech Collaborative" or "MassTech") is issuing this Grant Solicitation (Solicitation No. 2021-JAII-01) (the "Solicitation") to solicit responses from qualified firms ("Respondents") interested in receiving grant funding for Entrepreneur Support Organizations ("ESO") or other entities to fund projects that provide mentorship and growth support services for founders who are looking to accelerate performance of high growth firms (the "Project"). Known as the Innovation Institute's "Pathways to Scale" initiative, this Solicitation is intended to support ESOs or other civic, nonprofit, or academic institutions in their efforts to provide direct professional support through mentor networks for "scaling executive(s)" of growing innovation firms that represent "pillar" firms driving future economic growth in regions across the Commonwealth or within firms that have the potential to drive future growth in one of the state's key industry clusters. Respondents will be competing against each other for grant funding and the submissions of all Respondents shall be compared and evaluated pursuant to the evaluation criteria set forth in this Solicitation; a single Respondent may be selected.

Mass Tech Collaborative will be the contracting entity on behalf of the Innovation Institute for the purposes of this Solicitation, 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 Grant Agreement and Statement of Work with selected Respondents containing certain standard provisions (the "Agreement"), located [HERE](#).

1.2 Mass Tech Collaborative and the Innovation Institute

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 web site at www.masstech.org/innovation-institute.

2. THE GRANT

2.1 Grant Overview

Strong entrepreneurial ecosystems are foundational components to vibrant innovation economies. The Baker/Polito Administration, in close partnership with the Innovation Institute at MassTech, has worked hard to improve the economic environment in the Commonwealth and to make

Massachusetts an attractive place for entrepreneurs to start businesses by encouraging and supporting a myriad of startup support services. Massachusetts is committed to preserving and expanding its culture of tech-inspired entrepreneurship and calls upon incubators, accelerators, investors, and other entrepreneur support organizations to engage successful and seasoned entrepreneurs in mentorship networks to guide emerging high-growth firms and their executive teams through the challenges associated with growing companies to scale.

The [*Growing Innovative Companies to Scale*](#) report published by MIT's Industrial Performance Center defines a company of scale as one that:

1. Has achieved sustainable competitive advantage through market validation of its product or service,
2. Is generating significant sales revenue, and
3. Has built an internal infrastructure such that all typical functions of an established company (HR, marketing, distribution, etc.) exist and are part of the company's organizational structure.

A company of scale can also be measured quantitatively. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines a scale-up or "high-growth firm" as an enterprise with at least 10 employees and an average annual growth in employment or revenue of 20% over three consecutive years.

The Innovation Institute understands that the parameters for scale look differently across regions and industries. Respondents are asked to consider their own definitions for "scale-ups" and define the threshold requirements for what scale-ups look like in their region or industry. They are also asked to describe challenges faced by scaling companies in their region or industry, such as recruiting and hiring talent, professionalizing operations, and financing the company. It is the intent of the Innovation Institute that this solicitation enhances support for high-growth firms looking to overcome these challenges to grow in terms of market access, revenues, and number of employees in ways that add exponential value to their communities.

2.2 Grant Requirements and Guidance

Eligibility

Eligible Respondents must be a nonprofit entity located in Massachusetts.

Guidelines

Respondents should consider the following guidelines when generating their proposals:

1. *Proposal Framework*: In order to increase the survival rate of high-growth firms in Massachusetts, this Pathways to Scale solicitation offers funding for Respondents to develop a mentorship network and targeted program for founders or executives of companies with high-growth potential (referred to as "scaling executives"). One of the primary goals of the Pathways to Scale initiative is to match scaling executives with entrepreneurs who have successfully brought a high-growth firm to scale in Massachusetts or elsewhere. An emphasis is placed on quality engagements among a small cohort of scaling executives with mentors who have demonstrated experience scaling a startup or multiple startups and can help firms overcome obstacles related to growing a company to scale.

Respondents are asked to define the needs of scaling companies in their region or industry and describe the value that the proposed project will provide. Respondents should provide a definition and characteristics of scale-ups that they will use to evaluate candidates for the proposed projects. It is expected that the companies identified as candidates for the

proposed projects 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

[Appendix A](#) lists objectives of six stages of entrepreneurial development. It is expected that companies supported by the proposed projects will be operating primarily in stages 4 – 6 and will benefit from support services that align with the objectives in each stage.

2. *Demonstration of unmet need and opportunity in region or industry:* Proposals should clearly articulate the target population, industry, or region to be served and demonstrate recent growth by entrepreneurs in the targeted region or industry. Respondents should describe how the proposal addresses the needs of scaling executives and leads to improvements in individual and team leadership, management skills, systemization of business operations, hiring and recruiting, and other business growth needs.
3. *Demonstration of collaboration and stakeholder support:* Proposals that showcase support and/or collaboration, especially from other innovation-driven development efforts, will be considered more competitive. Where appropriate, Respondents are encouraged to utilize existing professional development services (from within your organization or outside) and/or collaborate with other ecosystem partners as opposed to building services from scratch.
4. *Outcomes:* Applications will be evaluated on the applicant's capability to deliver and measure the impacts of the Project. Respondents must describe the qualifications of lead organizers in executing upon the proposal and the key metrics to be used in measuring success.
5. *Level of Funding:* The Innovation Institute plans to award up to \$500,000 through the Pathways to Scale solicitation, which can be expended over a period of up to two years. We are planning to provide multiple awards ranging from \$50,000 to \$200,000 depending upon what is being proposed. Proposals in excess of \$200,000 will not be considered.

Proposal Structure

Respondents should structure their proposals to address the following:

- a. Executive Summary: High level description of the proposed Project. Please be sure to describe, in your own terms, the unmet needs that the proposal addresses.
- b. Target Audience: Identify the scaling companies that are candidates for the proposed Project.
 - i. Please list the scaling executives of the growth firms that are likely candidates for the Project. Briefly describe the market opportunity associated with the company and the traction the company has gained to date. Respondents are encouraged to both identify and line up commitments from scaling executives within their proposal, if possible. All scaling executives are expected to be working full-time for the company.
- c. Key Partners: Identify the mentors, service providers, and/or ecosystem partners that will contribute to the proposed project.

- i. Mentors – Please list the successful entrepreneurs or top executives you have selected to provide dedicated mentorship support for scaling executives. Describe the entrepreneurial or executive experiences that qualify the selected members to serve as mentors to high-growth companies.
 - Please include letters of commitment from mentors that have agreed to participate in the Project.
 - ii. Service Providers or Ecosystem Partners – List the service providers or ecosystem partners that will contribute to the proposed project. Describe the key resources, activities, and experience working within the entrepreneurial ecosystem that they provide.
 - Please provide letters of commitment from professional service providers or ecosystem partners that have agreed to participate in the Project.
 - iii. For those Respondents needing to recruit executives as part of an upcoming engagement – please describe your approach to recruitment and your prospects of success.
- d. Overview of the Proposed Project: Description of each element of your Project – this should include:
- i. Description of the mentorship network Project including reference to the 1:1 mentorship support you are proposing.
 - ii. Description of the growth support Projects you are proposing, if applicable. How would you differentiate services provided through a pathway for scale Project from the services one might generally provide a new startup enterprise?
 - iii. Why you think it is the right approach to address challenges faced by scaling executives in growth companies.
- e. Metrics: How do you plan to measure success both quantitatively and qualitatively?
- f. About the Respondent: What is the Respondent's history, if any, of working within the entrepreneurial ecosystem? Please describe any past successes.

2.3 Evaluation Process and Criteria

Each proposal will be reviewed and evaluated against the following criteria:

- A. *Strength of Cohort*: Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of whether the identified scaling companies offer future economic growth opportunities for the Commonwealth. Commitments to participate from scaling executives demonstrate prospects for a successful Project.
- B. *Strength of Concept*: Proposals will be evaluated on the strength of the project to address the regional or industry cluster challenges and opportunities described in the proposal. The concept will be reviewed on the strength of interventions both on the merits of their ability to attract scaling companies and the ability to support scale-ups through the late stages of entrepreneurial development.
- C. *Prospects for Success*: Proposals will be evaluated on the strength of the proposed plan and project team to deliver on its objectives of supporting scaling companies. The Respondents' demonstrated ability to forge and support mentorship relationships between the scaling executives and the successful

entrepreneurs is a threshold requirement for participating in this initiative. Description of the use of funds to execute on the proposed project should include key milestones and activities that produce measurable outcomes within the stated timeframe.

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.

Mass Tech Collaborative shall evaluate each Application that is properly submitted. As part of the selection process, Mass Tech Collaborative may invite finalists to answer questions regarding their Application in person or in writing. In its sole discretion, Mass Tech Collaborative may also choose to enter into a negotiation period with one or more finalist Respondent(s) and then ask the Respondent(s) to submit additional information.

Lack of debarment status by either the state or federal government is also required.

The order of these factors does not generally denote relative importance. The goal of this Solicitation is to select and enter into an Agreement with the Respondent that will most closely align with Mass Tech Collaborative's goals in the publication of this Solicitation. Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right to consider such other relevant factors as it deems appropriate.

All Respondents will be notified of final decisions via e-mail to the identified Team Leader. We anticipate the funding decisions will be made by June 7, 2021.

3. APPLICATION PROCESS

3.1 Application and Submission Instructions

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

- a. All Applications must be submitted electronically in Microsoft Word format.
- b. Required Submissions- All Applications must include the items listed below:
 - Application Cover Sheet (Attachment A)
 - Application, which shall include:
 - A description of Respondent (including descriptions of proposed subcontractors, if any) and Respondent's qualifications to perform the Project.
 - The details of Respondent's proposed Project.
 - The total not-to-exceed costs for the Project based on projected hours, proposed hourly rates, as well as any other appropriate costs, in the Budget Template (Attachment C). List additional fees, overhead charges, or reimbursable expenses, if any. As a general policy, the Mass Tech Collaborative does not pay mark-ups on reimbursables or out-of-pocket expenses. Mass Tech Collaborative also does not pay for word processing, overtime or meals. For travel costs, the Mass Tech Collaborative pays the IRS rate per mile.

- Authorized Application Signature and Acceptance Form (Attachment B), which contains specified certifications by Respondent. Please read the certifications carefully before signing.
 - Exceptions to the *Grant Agreement and Statement of Work*, located at [HERE](#), if any.
- c. Applications must be submitted electronically to proposals@masstech.org (please include the Solicitation number in the subject heading).
- d. Any and all responses, Applications, data, materials, information and documentation submitted to Mass Tech Collaborative in response to this Solicitation 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. fourteen (14) business days prior to the required date of Application submission set forth in Section 4.2 below. 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 ten (10) 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 and **shall only include the confidential material in the hard copy of the Application**. Any statements in an Application reserving any confidentiality or privacy rights that is inconsistent with these requirements and procedures will be disregarded.

3.2 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:
Solicitation Released	February 16, 2021
Bidders Webinar	March 12, 2021 @ 12:00 PM EST
Questions Due	March 16, 2021 @ 5 PM EST
Question and Answer File Posted	March 23, 2021 @ 5 PM EST
Updated- Applications Due	April 20, 2021 @ 3 PM EST
Notification of Award	June 14, 2021 @ 9 AM EST

3.3 Questions

Questions regarding this Solicitation must be submitted by email to proposals@masstech.org with the following Subject Line: “Questions – Solicitation No. 2021-JAII-01“. All questions must be received by 5:00 p.m. EST on March 16, 2021.

Responses to all questions received will be posted on or before 5:00 p.m. on March 23, 2021 to Mass Tech Collaborative and CommBuys website(s).

3.4 Bidders Webinar

A bidders' webinar will be held via Zoom on March 5, 2021 at 12:00 p.m. All potential Respondents interested in participating in the bidders' teleconference must register with Mass Tech Collaborative in order to obtain the call information. Interested Respondents may register for the session by emailing proposals@masstech.org.

Mass Tech Collaborative will post summary responses to procedural questions and issues addressed at the bidders' teleconference on the Mass Tech Collaborative and the CommBuys websites.

4.0 GENERAL CONDITIONS

4.1 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 Solicitation, as may be amended from time to time by Mass Tech Collaborative, does not commit Mass Tech Collaborative to select any organization(s), award any grant funds pursuant to this Solicitation, or pay any costs incurred in responding to this Solicitation. Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to withdraw the Solicitation, 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, all to the same extent as if this were a Request for Information.
- c) On matters related solely to this Solicitation 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 Solicitation. Respondents may contact the Procurement Team Leader for this Solicitation in the event this Solicitation 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 Solicitation.

- g) Mass Tech Collaborative's prior approval is required for any subcontracted services under any Agreement entered into as a result of this Solicitation. 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.

4.2 Posting of Modifications/Addenda to Solicitation

This Solicitation 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 Solicitation, 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, the Innovation Institute and COMMBUYS websites for any addenda or modifications to the Solicitation. The Mass Tech Collaborative accepts no liability and will provide no accommodation to Respondents who submit a response based on an out-of-date Solicitation.

Appendix A
Stages of Entrepreneurial Development

	Stage	Objectives
1	Ideation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding an idea or problem worth pursuing • Being adequately prepared to pursue an idea or problem
2	Customer Discovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding problem/solution fit • Building the MVP • Identifying and validating sales funnels
3	Customer Validation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding problem/solution fit • Validating business model • Validating Sales and Marketing roadmap
4	Strategy, Operational and Financial Validation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic validation – understanding how/where the company wants to grow and long-term goals • Operational Validation – developing effective functions of a company: HR, marketing, manufacturing, distribution, etc. • Financial Validation – developing projections, understanding cash flows, securing capital
5	Scaling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build Top-level Management Team • Build growth strategy • Optimize business model • Build production capacity • Systemize Operations management • Systemize sales – build a scalable system for generating leads and repeat sales
6	Self-Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing an effective innovation process • Implementing an effective adaptation process

Attachment A
Application Cover Sheet

Name of Respondent			
Mailing Address	City/Town	State	Zip Code
Telephone	Fax	Web Address	
Primary Contact for Clarification		Primary Contact E-mail Address	
Authorized Signatory		Authorized Signatory E-mail Address	
Legal Status/Jurisdiction (e.g., a Massachusetts Corporation, LLC, LLP, etc.)		Respondents DUNS 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 Solicitation requirements. The Respondent acknowledges that all of the terms and conditions of the Solicitation are mandatory. By executing this Authorized Respondent's Signature and Acceptance Form, Respondent certifies that they (1) are in compliance with the terms, conditions and specifications contained in this Solicitation, (2) acknowledges and understands the procedures for handling materials submitted to the Mass Tech Collaborative as set forth in section 3.1 d. of this Solicitation, (3) agrees to be bound by those procedures, and (4) agrees that the Mass Tech Collaborative shall not be liable under any circumstances for the disclosure of any materials submitted to the Mass Tech Collaborative pursuant to this Solicitation or upon the Respondent's selection.

The Respondent understands that, if selected by the Mass Tech Collaborative, the Respondent and Mass Tech Collaborative will execute an Agreement specifying the mutual requirements of participation. The undersigned has either (*please check one*):

- specified exceptions and counter-proposals to the terms and conditions of the [Agreement](#); or
- agrees to the terms and conditions set forth therein;

The undersigned acknowledges and agrees that the failure to submit exceptions and counter-proposals with this response shall be deemed a waiver, and the Agreement shall not be subject to further negotiation.

Respondent agrees that the entire bid response will remain valid for sixty (60) days from receipt by the Mass Tech Collaborative.

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 Solicitation, 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