Q: Was the RFP developed with any external input?
A: This RFP is largely unchanged from the 2019 RFP with edits primarily focused on broadening and clarifying the scope of projects that are eligible and was developed internally. The 2019 RFP was developed in partnership with the Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development and was reviewed informally by several third parties before it was released.

Q: Will there be diversity represented on the review committee?
A: Yes, while the review committee is not set until after the application deadline since there is overlap between the pool of possible reviewers and possible applicants, the review committee will be made up of MassTech staff as well as third parties and will incorporate diversity.

Q: Is there anything that has been prioritized or de-emphasized in this RFP based on lessons learned from the grants awarded in the previous RFP?
A: No, both of the original grantees are considered successful and have different programs targeting different participants for different target industries and in different regions of the state. With a sample size of two, we are not going to mandate a particular model of program for future applicants and are just as interested in new ideas.

Q: Does the proposed project have to be exclusive to the "tech sector" or can it also include other employers with tech needs?
A: No, the proposed program can serve employers outside of the tech sector with tech needs as long as the jobs being targeted are technical. In some regions, the largest employer of tech talent may not be a tech company and we recognize the increasing importance of tech occupations in other industries. As long as the program is focused on tech, either through the companies or jobs it will place individuals in, it is eligible. All submissions, will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and MassTech will make final eligibility determinations.

Q: Does the Innovation Institute prioritize particular regions or cities in Massachusetts based on higher populations, or do proposals from smaller population rural areas have an equal chance in being awarded?
A: There is no priority given to applicants based on region served.

Q: Are you looking for a set of specific interventions?
A: Beyond the guidelines that are described in the RFP, we don't want to give the impression that we are favoring specific interventions. We are seeking a broad spectrum of ideas with this RFP. We are not looking to fund standalone technical training programs. While applicants may incorporate technical training into their programs, it is not required.

Q: Does this exclusively prioritize getting net new underrepresented people into tech, or could there also be an advancement component?

A: There must be some emphasis on increasing the proportion of underrepresented groups within the tech workforce in Massachusetts, which would involve bringing new people in. However, programs may include elements that are intended to advance the careers of tech workers from under-represented groups.

Q: Is working with employers to change hiring and employment policies to better hire and retain BIPOC and women employees an eligible use of funds?
A: Yes, working with employers to change hiring and employment policies to both hire and retain more people from underrepresented groups, including BIPOC and women, is an eligible use of funds.

Q: Can these funds be used to support pathways to college?
A: Yes, as long as there is some sort of work experience built into the project. All submissions, will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and MassTech will make final eligibility determinations.

Q: When do you hope to see impacts of this grant?
A: Grant funds are expected to be expended over a frame that is not expected to surpass two years and applicants are not required to demonstrate impacts on hiring for internships or other positions during their initial interval. However, some impacts should be reportable by the end of the grant.

Q: Is there a required or suggested page limit for the application?
A: No, applicants may determine length based on what makes the best case for their idea. There are no penalties for length or brevity of submissions.