

A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR RI INNOVATION CAMPUS PROJECTS: BIOINNOVATION

The State of Rhode Island seeks to catalyze the formation of Innovation Campus(es) that will help bridge the gap between our universities' research capacity and the commercialization of that research into new products, businesses, and jobs in the life sciences sector. To that end, the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation (RI Commerce), in partnership with the University of Rhode Island (URI), is issuing an invitation for projects to support the growth of the life science economy within our commercial industry innovation and social enterprise ecosystem.

[The BIOCONNECTS New England application to the U.S. EDA's Build Back Better Regional Challenge \(BBBRC\)](#) was recently selected as a finalist eligible to compete for up to \$100 million in federal funds to advance the growth of the life science economy throughout the region. The following component project proposed under the BIOCONNECTS New England application has been pre-identified as a candidate for potential funding as an innovation campus project:

1. *Laboratory Incubator & Accelerator, to be located in Rhode Island*

- We are seeking proposals for a shared laboratory site and for an operator to support network-wide activities to ensure a robust pipeline of scalable businesses and technologies that can advance biotech innovation and small-scale manufacturing, accelerate translational research, conduct early demonstration, and develop commercialization programming in concert with URI. Collaboration with other Rhode Island universities is welcome. This shared laboratory space should be located in available space within an existing building; the specific location must be identified as part of the proposal and ideally would be situated in an area where it can best contribute to the state's growing life science cluster. The BIOCONNECTS New England application focuses upon the I-195 Innovation & Design District as one possibility.
- In describing the curation of the space, an applicant should speak of the amenities, assets, and programming that it will offer to the bioscience entrepreneurs who will utilize the space. It should also describe the methods the applicant will use to attract and retain tenants, recruit capital, and market to professionals interested in entering the life sciences field — especially minority and women entrepreneurs. Responses should also include how and at what cost the applicant proposes to lease benches and equipment to potential tenants.
- The state may request that the operator project manage any necessary improvements to the site (e.g., overseeing design, construction, etc.). Proposers should provide information on their expertise overseeing similar efforts in their response. Construction may be subject to purchasing requirements dictated by funding sources (e.g., EDA Build Back Better).

Funding Opportunity:

In order to be eligible to receive funds as a result of this RFP, applicants must fit EDA's qualifications as to what entities may be funded through the BBBRC. These qualifications can be found under the "Eligible Applicants" section of the Notice of Funding Opportunity, accessible [here](#).

The selected proposal(s) will receive a portion of available Innovation Campus funding that, in total, will add up to \$2.5 million in state funds, and the proposer will be required to provide matching private or federal funds that exceed the committed state funding. If the BIOCONNECTS New England application is selected for award by the EDA, it is anticipated that this project may be eligible for additional funding. Other sources of investment may also be possible. Following selection of the partner(s), the structure of the proposed Innovation Campus will be subject to negotiation in order to adhere to specific guidelines governing qualified EDA matching funds. The matching private or federal funds required for the award of state bond funds must: (i) be secured and committed to the project for the period of performance, (ii) be available as needed, and (iii) not be conditioned or encumbered in any way that may preclude its use consistent with the requirements of the state or project agreements. The state provided Innovation Campus bond funds must be used only (a) to acquire land or other real property or any interest, estate or right therein as may be necessary or advantageous to accomplish the purposes of this act; (b) to direct payment for the preparation of any reports, plans and specifications, and relocation expenses and other costs such as for furnishings, equipment designing, inspecting and engineering, required in connection with the implementation of the project; (c) to direct payment for the costs of construction, rehabilitation, enlargement, provision of service utilities, and razing of facilities, and other improvements to land in connection with the implementation of the project; and (d) to direct payment for the cost of equipment, supplies, devices, materials and labor for repair, renovation or conversion of systems and structures as necessary for the project. If the BIOCONNECTS New England application is selected for funding by the EDA, certain restrictions will also apply on the use of those funds.

The comprehensive strategies envisioned and executed by the winning application(s) will include a visionary programming concept and physical design and will maximize collaboration and opportunities across industry, academic, and research tenants.

Background:

The Life Science industry cluster for this RI Innovation Campus as well as the application to the EDA BBBRC was selected based on [Rhode Island Innovates 2.0](#), Rhode Island's current comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS), which outlines the state's economic environment and opportunities for the future. Available and accessible life science infrastructure is a crucial component of this report's recommendations for advancing the state's overall economy.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Candidates will propose their ideas for a transformative concept that supports an overall strategy for catalyzing commercial activity, job growth, research capacity, and innovation in the life science industry. An ideal qualified application will bolster Rhode Island's strengths as a leader in innovation nationwide.

Respondents should provide a one-to-two-page (12pt) Innovation Campus **Partner Project Vision** which includes:

1. A descriptive vision for the intended programmatic concept, including research focus(es), proposed industry & academic tenants, and programs and collaboration opportunities. This

should also include a summary description of their business model for how they intend to administer this Innovation Campus.

2. As described above, proposals should identify the location and how they would make best use of the space available to them.
3. A description of the amenities, assets, and programming that it will offer to the bioscience entrepreneurs who will utilize the space. It should also describe the methods the applicant will use to attract and retain tenants, recruit capital, and market to professionals interested in entering the life sciences field — especially minority and women entrepreneurs.
4. An explanation of the ways in which the respondents' application is consistent with and advancing the BBBRC submission.
5. A narrative description of the respondents' interest in committing substantial resources to the growth of Rhode Island's innovation economy and the respondents' understanding of opportunities for industry and academic collaboration to significantly contribute to this goal within key industries.
6. Respondents must provide a statement projecting the economic impact of the proposed concept, including the number of companies and/or full-time equivalent jobs created upon initiation of consortium operations, along with a long-term projection for additional companies and/or jobs created over time.
7. Responses should include how and at what cost the applicant proposes to lease benches and equipment to potential tenants.

Respondents should also provide an additional one-to-two-page (12pt) Partner's **Statement of Qualifications** which includes:

1. Overview and examples of relevant team capacity and experience necessary to successfully execute the vision of their proposed Innovation Campus project, including the team proposed and experience with public-private collaboration and contributions to innovation initiatives.
2. An outline of the financing, including the required matching funds (which exceed those requested) that respondents anticipate will be incorporated into their proposal. This should include how the proposed funding could be used as a match for the BBBRC application.
3. Description of intended matching funds to be raised/pledged, the sources of those funds, and their intended use(s). Description of intended use of requested bond funds (must be a capital investment).
4. A description of the proposed URI collaboration including educational programming, aligned research and prospective commercial results.

Finally, respondents should include:

1. Project budget detailing sources and uses
2. Operating pro forma
3. Timeline
4. Feasibility study for the project
5. Sustainability plan

Applications will be evaluated and ranked with the following criteria:

CRITERIA	MAXIMUM SCORE
Project Vision	30 points
Statement of Qualifications	35 points
Financial Approach and Strength	35 points
Total Maximum Points	100 points

Funds will be allocated from up to \$2.5 million in bond funds previously approved by Rhode Island voters, and funds requested must be exceeded by matching funding from non-state sources. Other state incentives may be available; however, such funding will not qualify as a match for bond funding.

RI Commerce and URI reserve the right to adjust criteria and alter the program at any time prior to the submission deadline. RI Commerce and URI reserve the right to extend deadlines or to terminate this solicitation at any time, and by responding hereto, no person, firm, or entity is vested with any rights in any way whatsoever.

PROCESS SUBMISSION SCHEDULE:

Submissions are due no later than March 7, 2022 (per schedule below) and should be sent to Hilary Fagan at hilary.fagan@commerceri.com and the Business Engagement Center at bec@uri.edu.

MILESTONE	DATE
Invitation release	February 21, 2022
RFP Submissions due	March 7, 2022
Rhode Island Innovation Campus designation of partner(s)	March 14, 2022
Innovation Campus partner contracting	Fall 2022

Inquiries:

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