

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Michigan Strategic Fund

BUSINESS INCUBATOR PROGRAMS

RFP-CASE- 205135

REMINDER

Please check your proposal to make sure you have included all of the specifications and required documents listed in the Request for Proposals. Please email one document that includes contact page, check list page, and proposal.

APPLICANTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSURING THAT THE FOLLOWING IDENTIFYING INFORMATION APPEARS IN THE SUBJECT LINE OF YOUR EMAIL: “RFP-CASE- 205135” with Company Name.

The MSF will not respond to telephone inquiries, or visitation by Applicants or their representatives. APPLICANTS OR ANY OF THEIR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES MAY NOT INITIATE CONTACT WITH MEDC OR MSF STAFF OR ANY MEMBER OF THE APPOINTED JOINT EVALUATION COMMITTEE (JEC), OTHER THAN THE CONTACT LISTED BELOW, FOR ANY REASON DURING THE RFP OR PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCESS. Applicant’s sole point of contact concerning the RFP is below and any communication outside of this process may result in disqualification.

Contracts and Grants
Michigan Strategic Fund
300 North Washington Square, 3rd Floor
Lansing, Michigan 48913
contractsandgrants@michigan.org

IMPORTANT DUE DATES

- **May 5, 2017 3:00 p.m.:** Questions from potential Applicants are due via email to contractsandgrants@michigan.org. Please note: The Michigan Strategic Fund (“MSF”) will not respond to questions that are not received by the above date and time. In addition, questions that are phoned, faxed or sent through regular mail will not be accepted.
- **May 11, 2017 , by close of business:** Responses to all qualifying questions will be posted on the MSF’s website, <http://www.michiganbusiness.org/rfp-205135>.
- **May 31, 2017, at 3:00 p.m.:** Electronic versions of your Proposal due to the MSF via email to contractsandgrants@michigan.org. **Proposals will not be accepted via U.S. mail or any other delivery method.**

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
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This Request for Proposals (“RFP”) is issued by the Michigan Strategic Fund (the “MSF”), Contracts and Grants Unit (“C&G”). The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (the “MEDC”) provides administrative services associated with the programs and activities of the Michigan Strategic Fund Act on behalf of the MSF. C&G is the sole point of contact with regard to all application and contractual matters relating to the services described in this RFP. The MSF is the only office authorized to change, modify, amend, alter, clarify, etc. the specifications, terms and conditions of this RFP and any contract(s) awarded as a result of this RFP (the “Contract”). Contracts and Grants will remain the SOLE POINT OF CONTACT throughout the application process. ***The MSF will not respond to telephone inquiries, or visitation by Applicants or their representatives. Applicant’s sole point of contact concerning the RFP is below and any communication outside of this process may result in disqualification.***

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Michigan Strategic Fund
300 North Washington Square, 3rd Floor
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SECTION I WORK STATEMENT

A) PURPOSE

Section 88k(2) of the MSF Act, MCL 125.2088k(2), allows the MSF Board to award grants and loans from the 21st Century Jobs Fund for “ ... basic research, applied research, university technology transfer and commercialization of products, processes and services to encourage the development of competitive-edge technologies to create jobs in the state.”

Through this 2017 Business Incubator Request for Proposals (the “Business Incubator RFP”), the MSF Board desires to allocate up to \$566,787 (“Award Amount”), disbursed over two years to non-profit organizations and/or Michigan institutions of higher education that operate business incubator/accelerator programs AND fulfill the ELIGIBILITY and QUALIFICATIONS below. The term of the award may be extended by an additional three years and the amount of the award increased at the sole discretion of the MSF Board and subject to additional funding. This RFP is focused on providing funding for organizations that require funding to support their gatekeeper, business accelerator fund, and pre-seed fund activities.

B) BACKGROUND STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

Since 2009 the MSF has provided funding to business incubators to **stimulate the creation and continued growth of technology-based businesses and jobs** by capitalizing on the State of Michigan's growing base of high technology industry, its skilled labor force, its nationally recognized university system, its SmartZones, and its business incubators. The MSF through this RFP wishes to continue this activity.

Funding in the form of a grant will be awarded to non-profit organization and/or Michigan institutions of higher education through a competitive process in which all submitted proposals will be reviewed by a Joint Evaluation Committee (“JEC”). Results from the JEC review will be provided, in the form of numerical scores and award recommendation(s), to the MSF Board.

C) ELIGIBILITY

- Organizations with MSF/MEDC grants under the business incubator program that end 5/1/2017 or later are **not** eligible to apply.
- **Only organizations that are located within a SmartZone or a SmartZone Satellites are eligible to apply.**

D) QUALIFICATIONS AND AWARD INFORMATION

IF APPLICANT IS ELIGIBLE UNDER THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA LISTED ABOVE, APPLICANT MUST ALSO FULFILL the following criteria:

- **Purpose**

Proposals submitted MUST fulfill the following purposes.

1. To assist SmartZone incubators with the following activities: gatekeeping activities (identifying and attracting clients and helping them navigate through the entrepreneurial ecosystem) and supporting BAF

and Pre-Seed Fund Applications. Proposals for up to \$100,000/year for 2 years may be submitted. Applicant must provide at least a 1-1 match. This funding will only be available to pay the salary of a key person and his/her expenses. The key person must perform the following duties:

- a. Help clients with gatekeeping activities
- b. Help clients with Business Accelerator Fund (“BAF”) applications and support BAF activities
- c. Help clients with Pre-Seed Funds applications and support Pre-Seed Fund activities
- d. Must provide resume of key person (and contingent upon approval of MEDC). This person should have at least one year experience working for a technology start-up or early stage company. If not, must provide a process whereby this person is coached by an approved service provider such as Small Business Development Center (“SBDC”) to work with technology companies.
- e. This person will be the key person on the grant agreement and attend SmartZone meeting.
- f. The proposal must identify the need for such a person, how the person meets the need, and how the person will carry out his/her responsibilities.

- **Technology Sectors**

Proposals submitted **MUST** be to foster the growth of Michigan’s technology based economy by supporting early stage companies and entrepreneurs to create jobs and commercialize product(s) within one or more of the competitive edge technology sectors defined in Section 125.2088a of the MSF Act, as amended, and as approved by the MSF Board, including Advanced Automotive, Manufacturing, Materials, Information, and Agricultural Processing Technology, Alternative Energy, Homeland Security and Defense Technology, Life Sciences, and Other Innovative Technologies.

- **Non-Profit Entities and Institutions of Higher Education**

Only non-profit organizations and Michigan institutions of higher education are eligible to receive funding through this RFP. To be eligible as a non-profit corporation, an applicant must, at the time the award is made, be: (i) a non-profit corporation duly organized under the laws of Michigan; or (ii) a foreign non-profit corporation duly authorized to transact business in Michigan. The principal site for the applicant’s project must be a facility located in Michigan. Such a facility must be either: (i) owned or leased by the non-profit organization; or (ii) owned or leased by an organization collaborating on the project. If the principal site is owned or leased by a collaborating organization, the organization must meet the “principal site of the project” requirement for a non-profit corporation, as defined in this section. Eligible non-profit organizations must be authorized to conduct business in the State of Michigan. Institutions of higher education must be in Michigan.

- **Leverage and Match**

The MSF Board encourages applicants to leverage other resources as a condition of the award. Each proposal must provide specific financial or in-kind contribution committed to, or available for, the direct support of the proposed plan to reach the required 1:1 match. Cash match is favored. Other State of Michigan grant funds are not eligible to meet the match requirement. Letters of financial commitment and proposal support are not required in the proposal though may be requested during the award process.

- **Award and Grant Agreements**

All grant agreements approved by the MSF Board will contain a provision that the Auditor General has access to the books and records, including financial records and all other information and data relevant to the terms of the grant agreement related to the use of the funds.

Successful proposals approved for funding by the MSF Board are subject to the final execution of a legal grant agreement and successful completion of a due diligence review which may include, among other things, a criminal and civil background check of the Applicant and certain key personnel.

Insufficient or inappropriate proposals will not be funded.

- **Award Reporting Requirements**

Progress Reports are due every six (6) months, due in October and April throughout the term of the grant agreement. For Progress Reports, grantees must report on Milestones, Budget, and Metrics. The grantee is responsible for timely submission of reports that must be submitted electronically through the MEDC Portal. Delayed, incomplete, or incorrect reporting filed will likely result in a loss of funding to the incubator/accelerator. Annual site visits are conducted by the MEDC Grant Manager.

- **Overhead Rates**

The overhead rate (indirect administration costs) for the award recipient is limited to reflect actual overhead, but not greater than 15 percent (15%) of the Award Amount over the lifetime of the grant agreement. Preference will be given to proposals that are able to leverage outside funding sources to reduce overhead expenses for the award recipient.

SECTION II PROPOSAL FORMAT

To be considered, each Applicant must submit a **COMPLETE** proposal in response to this RFP using the format specified. **APPLICANTS MUST NOT COMMUNICATE REGARDING THIS RFP WITH MEDC PERSONNEL OR JEC MEMBERS DURING THE ENTIRE PROCESS THROUGH THE APPROVAL OF THE MSF BOARD APPROVAL.** Applicant's proposal must be submitted in the format outlined below. There should be no attachments, enclosures, or exhibits other than those required in the RFP or considered by the Applicant to be essential to a complete understanding of the proposal. All proposals must be signed by an individual authorized by the Applicant to submit the application on its behalf. Each section of the proposal should be clearly identified with appropriate headings:

A) COMPLETE PROPOSAL

- 1) Contact Page – State the Applicant organization's full name, address, and phone and facsimile number. Also included should be contact information, including phone number, email, cell phone number, and fax numbers. Also include signature of the authorized signor of the applicant organization.
- 2) Check List Page – Include a checklist of the required sections of the proposal, as listed in this Section II-A) 3 a-h and an indication that the section is included in the proposal. And include as indicated in Section III.O. below the following: "Applicant certifies that it is not an Iran-linked business as defined in MCL 129.312." Applicant should provide Conflict of Issues information if applicable, see IIIF.
- 3) Proposal (up to 10 pages) – Provide a proposal and include the required elements a-h, as described here. **In the Proposal clearly identify the following sections as headers.**

a) Eligibility

The Applicant must clearly identify how they are eligible to apply under one of the following criteria:

1. Eligibility Criteria 1: Incubators located within a SmartZone (including SmartZone Satellites) AND current funding ends prior to 5/1/2017.

b) Executive Summary

The Executive Summary should summarize the information provided in response to paragraphs (a) above and (c) through (h) below. And specifically indicate:

- **THE NAME OF THE APPLICANT ORGANIZATION**
- **THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA (See Section I.C. above) AND PROOF OF SUCCESS**
- **THE AMOUNT OF FUNDS REQUESTED**
- **THE AMOUNT OF MATCHING FUNDS**
- **THE TERM (up to 2 years)**
- **THE PURPOSE OF THE FUNDING**
- **TARGETED NUMBERS FOR:**
 - **Companies Created**
 - **Jobs Created**
 - **Increase Investment/Revenue**

c) Purpose of Funds

The Applicant must clearly indicate whether the organization is a non-profit corporation or an institution of higher education. The Applicant must clearly describe how the proposed use of funds will foster the growth of Michigan's technology based economy and clearly identify the specific competitive edge technology sectors that the Applicant will serve.

The Proposals must clearly indicate how the Applicant will fulfill the following purposes:

1. To assist SmartZone incubators with the following activities: gatekeeping activities (identifying and attracting clients and helping them navigate through the entrepreneurial ecosystem) and supporting BAF and Pre-Seed Fund Applications. Proposals for up to \$100,000/year for 2 years may be submitted. Applicant must provide at least a 1-1 match. This funding will only be available to pay the salary of a key person and his/her expenses. The key person must perform the following duties:
 - a. Help clients with gatekeeping activities
 - b. Help clients with BAF applications and support BAF activities
 - c. Help clients with Pre-Seed Funds applications and support Pre-Seed Fund activities
 - d. Must provide resume of key person (and contingent upon approval of MEDC). This person should have at least one year experience working for a technology start-up or early stage company. If not, must provide a process whereby this person is coached by an approved service provider such as SBDC to work with technology companies.
 - e. This person will be the key person on the grant agreement and attend SmartZone meeting.
 - f. The proposal must identify the need for such a person, how the person meets the need, and how the person will carry out his/her responsibilities.

d) Past Experience

The Applicant should indicate past experience with technology based business incubation/acceleration.

e) Team

Summarize key personnel, their time commitment to the project, their specific responsibilities, and their value. Identify collaborative partners, their responsibilities, and value. Must include RESUME of key person. Key person must have at least one-year experience working for a technology start-up or early stage company, or include a process whereby he/she will work with an approved service provider for coaching and guidance.

f) Milestones/Deliverables

Identify semi-annual milestones/deliverables that the Applicant will commit to as a result of providing the proposed services. If Applicant is awarded funding, Progress Reports are due April 15 and October 15 every year throughout the award, therefore provide milestones/deliverables that will be completed in April and October over the course of the proposal. Include a "targeted metrics" milestone for each reporting period. For this milestone, the applicant should indicate a targeted number for each of the following metrics: companies created, jobs created, and follow on funding. Identify how milestone completion will result in specific Economic Impact identified in (h).

Additionally, Applicants selected for funding will be required to submit performance metrics to measure the effectiveness of the program; these metrics include, but are not limited to: dollars leveraged, new companies created, companies expanded, companies served, jobs created,

jobs retained, average salaries of new and retained jobs, new sales, and funding obtained by client companies, including amount and source of such funding (sources including state funds, federal funds, venture capital, angel funds, bank/loan, owner investment, other), as well as the names and amounts of companies funded by the program.

g) Budget Request

Attach a schedule of all expenses covering each of the services and activities identified in your proposal. Specifically identify THE AMOUNT OF FUNDS REQUESTED, the TERM REQUESTED, PUBLIC AND/OR PRIVATE LEVERAGED FUNDS (identify the 1:1 match), and what the Applicant proposes to do with FUNDS APPLIED THROUGH THIS RFP and the TIMING OF THE FUNDS. Progress Reports are due in April and October so proposals should include 6-month budgets of relevant line items that align with these dates. Include the budget in a table format with column headings, Start of grant-9/30/2017, 10/1/17-3/31/18, etc. and rows should include the expense line-items. Budget line-items should be only for the pay and expenses of the key person.

h) Economic Impact

Identify the targeted number of companies created, jobs created, and follow on funding or increases in investment/revenue resulting from the services. Include justification and assumptions related to these expectations. You will be held responsible for delivering these specific numbers in your semi-annual Progress Reports. Explain how you define success and will deliver a successful program. Identify how you will make an economic development impact and be sustainable.

B) PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL

Submit an electronic version of your proposal (one document that includes contact page, check list page and proposal) to the MSF via email to contractsandgrants@michigan.org not later than **3:00 p.m. on May 31, 2017**. The MSF has no obligation to consider any proposal that is not timely received. **Proposals will not be accepted via U.S. mail or any other delivery method.**

APPLICANTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSURING THAT THE FOLLOWING IDENTIFYING INFORMATION APPEARS IN THE SUBJECT LINE OF YOUR EMAIL: *"RFP-CASE- 205135" with Applicant Name.*

SECTION III RFP PROCESS AND TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A) **QUESTIONS**

Questions from Applicants concerning the specifications in this RFP must be received via e-mail no later than **3:00 pm on May 5, 2017**. Questions must be submitted to:

Contracts and Grants
contractsandgrants@michigan.org

B) **PROPOSALS**

To be considered, Applicants must submit a complete response to this RFP, using the format provided in Section II of this RFP, by **3:00 p.m. on May 31, 2017 to contractsandgrants@michigan.org**. No other distribution of proposals is to be made by the Applicant. Applicant is responsible for ensuring that the proposal is submitted to the proper e-mail address.

C) **ECONOMY OF PREPARATION**

Each proposal should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise description of the Applicant's ability to meet the requirements of the RFP. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity of content.

D) **SELECTION CRITERIA**

Responses to this RFP will be evaluated based upon a two-step review process. The proposal must address the requirements described in Section II of this RFP.

The first step is an evaluation of which proposals satisfactorily meet the requirements of this RFP as stated in Section II. Incomplete proposals will not be accepted or reviewed.

1) **Step I – Initial evaluation for compliance**

- a) *Proposal Content* – Contracts and Grants will screen the proposals for technical compliance to include but not limited to:
- Timely submission of the proposal
 - Eligibility
 - Executive Summary
 - Purpose
 - Past Experience
 - Team
 - Milestones/deliverables
 - Budget
 - Economic impact – Expected number of businesses created, jobs created, and private investment leveraged.
 - Proposal signed physically or electronically by an official of the Applicant authorized to bind the Applicant to its provisions.

- Proposals satisfy the form and content requirements of this RFP.

2) Step II – Criteria for Satisfactory Proposals

- a.) During the second step of the selection process, proposals will be considered by a JEC comprised of individuals selected by the MSF. Only those proposals that satisfy the technical requirements described in this RFP, as determined in the sole discretion of the JEC, will be considered for evaluation in Step II. The JEC reserves the right to request additional information from any Applicant.
- b.) *Purpose, Economic Impact, and Competence of Personnel* – The proposal should indicate the ability of the Applicant to meet the eligibility and requirements of this RFP and achieve the economic impact. The proposal should indicate the competence of the personnel whom the Applicant intends to assign to the project, including education and experience.

		Weight
1.	ELIGIBILITY	Yes or No
2.	Executive Summary	5
3.	Purpose	15
4.	Past Experience	10
5.	Team	20
6.	Milestones/Deliverables	10
7.	Budget	10
8.	Economic Impact	15
9.	Preferences	15
TOTAL		100

- c.) Statutorily-required preferences and additional preferences –
- Contributes to the development of economic diversification or the creation of employment opportunities in this state.
 - Promotes collaborations between institutions of higher education, Michigan nonprofit research institutions, Michigan nonprofit corporations, and qualified businesses.
 - Meets 1 or more of the following: (i) Forecasts revenues within 2 years; (ii) Has outside investments from investors with experience and management teams with experience in the industry targeted by the proposal; and (iii) Has outside directors with expertise in the industry targeted by the proposal.
 - Is contributing a cash match.
 - Is able to leverage outside funding sources to reduce overhead expenses.
- d.) During the JEC's review, Applicants may be required to make oral presentations of their proposals to the JEC. These presentations provide an opportunity for the Applicants to clarify the proposals. The MEDC will schedule these presentations, if required by the JEC. Only those Applicants that score 70 points or higher on the written review will be invited for an oral presentation if the JEC determines that an oral presentation is necessary.

E) TAXES

The MSF may refuse to award a contract to any Applicant who has failed to pay any applicable taxes or if the Applicant has an outstanding debt to the State or the MSF.

Except as otherwise disclosed in an exhibit to the Proposal, Applicant certifies that all applicable taxes are paid as of the date the Applicant's Proposal was submitted to the MSF and the Applicant owes no outstanding debt to the State or the MSF.

F) CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Applicant must disclose, in an exhibit to the proposal, any possible conflicts of interest that may result from an award under this RFP.

Except as otherwise disclosed in the proposal, the Applicant affirms that to the best of its knowledge there exists no actual or potential conflict between the Applicant, the Applicant's project manager(s) or its family's business or financial interests ("Interests") and the MSF or MEDC. In the event of any change in the RFP, the Applicant will inform the MSF and the MEDC regarding possible conflicts of interest which may arise as a result of such change and agrees that all conflicts shall be resolved to the MSF's satisfaction or the Applicant may be disqualified from consideration under this RFP. As used in this Section, "conflict of interest" shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Giving or offering a gratuity, kickback, money, gift, or anything of value to an official, officer, or employee of the MSF or the MEDC with the intent of receiving an award from the MSF or favorable treatment under a contract;
2. Having or acquiring at any point during the RFP process or during the term of the award, any contractual, financial, business or other interest, direct or indirect, that would conflict in any manner or degree with Applicant's performance of its duties and responsibilities to the MSF under the award or otherwise create the appearance of impropriety with respect to the award or performance of the award; or
3. Currently in possession of or accepting during the RFP process or the term of the award anything of value based on an understanding that the actions of the Applicant or its affiliates or Interests on behalf of the MSF will be influenced.

G) BREACH OF CONTRACT

Except as otherwise disclosed in an exhibit to Applicant's proposal, Applicant is not in material default or breach of any contract or agreement that it may have with the State of Michigan or any of its departments, commissions, boards or agencies, or any other public body in the State of Michigan. Further, Applicant represents and warrants that it has not been a party to any contract with the State or any public body that was terminated within the previous five (5) years because the Applicant failed to perform or otherwise breached an obligation of such contract.

H) FALSE INFORMATION

If the MSF determines that an Applicant purposefully or willfully submitted false information in response to this RFP, the Applicant will not be considered for an award and any resulting Contract that may have been executed may be terminated.

I) DISCLOSURE

All Applicants should be aware that proposals submitted to the MSF in response to this RFP may be subject to disclosure under the provisions of Public Act 442 of 1976, as amended, known as the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"). Accordingly, confidential information should be excluded from Applicant's proposals. Applicants, however, are encouraged to provide sufficient information to enable the MSF to determine the Applicant's qualifications and to understand or identify areas where confidential information exists and could be provided. The FOIA also provides for the complete disclosure of the contract and any attachments or exhibits thereto.

J) CLARIFICATION/CHANGES IN THE RFP

Any change or update to the acceptance of proposals will be posted on the MEDC website. Such postings shall constitute constructive notice to the general public and to all Applicants of any modifications or alterations of the deadline for proposals. Therefore, Applicants are strongly encouraged to continuously check the MEDC website at <http://www.michiganbusiness.org/rfp-205135>.

Neither the MSF nor the MEDC will directly notify Applicants of any changes to the RFP.

K) ELECTRONIC RECEIPT OF PROPOSALS

AN ELECTRONIC VERSION OF YOUR PROPOSAL MUST BE RECEIVED AND TIME-STAMPED BY THE MSF TO contractsandgrants@michigan.org, ON OR BEFORE **3:00 p.m. on May 31, 2017**. Applicants are responsible for timely submission of their proposal. THE MSF HAS NO OBLIGATION TO CONSIDER ANY PROPOSAL THAT IS NOT RECEIVED BY THE APPOINTED TIME.

L) RESERVATION OF MSF DISCRETION

Notwithstanding any other statement in this RFP, the MSF reserves the right to:

- 1) reject any and all proposals;
- 2) waive any errors or irregularities in the application process or in any proposal;
- 3) reissue the RFP;
- 4) negotiate with any Applicant for a different award amount;
- 5) reduce or expand the scope of the project, and reissue the RFP or negotiate with any Applicant regarding the revised project
- 6) extend the term of the project and add additional funding as necessary or appropriate; or
- 7) defer or abandon the project.

Decisions by the MSF are final and not subject to appeal.

Any attempt by an Applicant, collaborating entity, or other party of interest to the project to influence the awards process, to appeal, and/or take any action, including, but not limited to, legal action, regarding the proposal or awards process in general may result in the Applicant's disqualification and elimination from the award process.

M) JURISDICTION

In the event that there are conflicts concerning this RFP that proceed to court, jurisdiction will be in a Michigan court of law. Nothing in this RFP shall be construed to limit the rights and remedies of the MSF or the MEDC that are otherwise available.

N) ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATION

Pursuant to Public Act 517 of 2012, an Iran linked business is not eligible to submit an application or proposal to a request for proposal issued by a public entity.

Applicants must include the following certification in the proposal:

“Applicant certifies that it is not an Iran-linked business as defined in MCL 129.312.”

Failure to submit this certification will result in disqualification from consideration.