



GRANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Workforce Development Capital Program

Solicitation 2023 (FY25-26)

Program Manager:

Ryan Mudawar

Contact:

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Application:

www.masslifesciences.com/programs/workforcecapital

Online Application Opens:

December 11, 2023

Applications Due:

March 15, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

1. Introduction

1.1. Program Overview

The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) seeks to further the development and expansion of life sciences education and training programs offered by post-secondary academic institutions and non-profit organizations through capital investment in industry-aligned certificate and degree programs. The MLSC Workforce Development Capital Grant Program will award funding of up to \$750,000 per project for the purchase and installation of life sciences equipment, renovations, lab furniture, materials, supplies, and/or technology that will enable them to effectively prepare students for high-demand career opportunities in the life sciences.

Through this solicitation, the MLSC is particularly seeking to seed, enhance and/or expand training programs that address critical skills and talent supply gaps facing the state's life science industry. Such programs include those focused on biomanufacturing, data sciences, and regulatory affairs occupations, among others, and have at least one industry partnership. Furthermore, MLSC is committed to increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion within the life sciences workforce and will prioritize investment in high-demand programs that serve underrepresented populations.

1.2. About the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center

The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) is an economic development and investment agency with a mission of supporting the growth and development of the life sciences in Massachusetts. Through public-private funding initiatives, the MLSC supports innovation, education, research and development, commercialization, and manufacturing activities in the fields of biopharma, medical device, diagnostics, and digital health. As a quasi-public agency, MLSC also offers programs that fund innovation-driven economic and workforce development initiatives in Massachusetts. The MLSC's mission is to serve as the "hub" of the Massachusetts life sciences ecosystem, encourage innovation through investments in good science and good business, strengthen and protect Massachusetts' global leadership position in the life sciences, accelerate the commercialization of promising treatments, therapies, and cures that will improve patient care, and create jobs and drive economic and STEM workforce development.

For more information about the MLSC, please visit www.masslifesciences.com.

2. Eligibility Criteria

Applicant must demonstrate compliance with the following minimum criteria:

Criteria	Minimum Requirement
Applicant	<p>Must be one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Massachusetts college or university (public or private)B. Massachusetts based non-profit organization delivering post-secondary life sciences training. <p>Multiple eligible institutions/organizations can submit a joint proposal. The application must be authorized by a senior leader (e.g., President, CEO, Executive Director, etc.), for each institution/organization requesting funding (if there are more than one).</p> <p>Applicants are permitted to submit multiple proposals for separate and unrelated projects.</p>

<p>Program</p>	<p>Funding must be requested for equipment, supplies, materials, and/or technology to support training that prepares students with skills needed for life sciences careers. Programs must have a focus on skills training for high-demand occupations within the life sciences sector, including but not limited to biomanufacturing, regulatory affairs, data science, facilities management, quality control and quality assurance.</p> <p>The “life sciences” are defined in the MLSC’s enabling legislation as “advanced and applied sciences that expand the understanding of human physiology and have the potential to lead to medical advances or therapeutic applications.”</p>
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3. Allowable Costs

Grant recipients can only request reimbursement for approved costs as itemized in their budget. Post-award budget modifications are permissible with MLSC approval. Allowable costs include equipment, lab furniture, renovations, supplies, reagents, and technology (purchase of hardware and software) relevant to life sciences education and training. Equipment installation and maintenance costs are also reimbursable.

Non-allowable expenses include direct labor, legal expenses, travel, paying off debt, paying for operating costs such as rent and utilities, renting space for storage of memory or hard drives, cloud storage fees, other subscription fees, overhead/indirect costs and activities funded by other funding sources.

The MLSC reserves the right to adjust the requested amount of funding for each proposal. Following execution of the Grant Agreement, funds will be provided on a reimbursement basis to awardees via electronic fund transfer (EFT) upon verification of costs incurred.

4. Purchasing Period

Through this solicitation, grants are to be awarded for Fiscal Year 2025, with the option to also request funding in Fiscal Year 2026 as necessary. All equipment, materials, supplies, and/or technology must be shipped to grant recipients between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 for items budgeted for FY25 and between July 1, 2025 and June 30, 2026 for items budgeted for FY26.

5. Review Process and Criteria

MLSC staff will conduct an initial administrative review to determine eligibility of all submitted applications. Eligible applicants will then be reviewed and scored by a panel of external reviewers consisting of life sciences educators and industry professionals. Funding recommendations will then be made to the MLSC Board of Directors based on reviewer feedback and scores. The number of awards will be determined by the quality of the proposals.

Grant recipients will be selected on a competitive basis according to the criteria presented below. These criteria will be used to: 1) identify applicants that meet minimum threshold criteria; and 2) compare and select an applicant that best meets the goals of the solicitation.

For this solicitation, the MLSC is interested in supporting applicants that will further its goal of developing a skilled workforce suitable for employment in the life sciences, particularly in high-demand occupations. Successful proposals will explain how the requested equipment and supplies will create learning opportunities that are aligned with the needs of the life sciences industry.

MLSC reserves the right to consider only applications that, in its sole judgment, meet the minimum threshold requirements. MLSC staff may contact the applicant to request supplemental information prior to formal review. In addition, MLSC reserves the right to make no awards, to award less than the applicant requests, and/or to award less than the maximum amount of funds potentially available through this solicitation.

Criteria	Sub-Criteria
<p>Minimum Threshold</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant meets the minimum requirements identified in Section 2. • The application is complete and responsive to the solicitation’s requirements. • The application is submitted prior to the established deadline.
<p>Program Description</p>	<p>The application must include/address the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of project/program to be implemented/expanded. This includes specific credentials, delivery model, and length of program. Priority will be given to programs that seek to train relatively large cohorts. • Potential to fill a gap in or accelerate the development of skills in demand by industry in the region in which Applicant is located. • Demonstration that Applicant’s training program is a result of input and advice provided by life science industry professionals. • Summary of items to be purchased and justification for why they are needed. • Estimated/anticipated number of students to be served (that will have access to requested equipment). • Potential for training program to benefit students who are under-represented in the life sciences or economically disadvantaged. • Efforts by Applicant to evaluate the success of its program by tracking student outcomes. • Demonstration that Applicant has dedicated and effective resources to provide career development services to students including providing students with access to career awareness activities and documenting the number of internship placements in the life sciences, connections to life science industry partners, and evidence of job placements in the life sciences upon graduation. • Cash or in-kind matching funds awarded or anticipated. Applicants are strongly encouraged to identify matching funds that leverage MLSC funding. Matching funds should directly relate to the proposal and can include other grants (from state or private entities) or any non-allowable costs covered by the Applicant.

Team and Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of personnel implementing the program and providing training. • To the extent possible, brief summaries of the qualifications, experience, and expertise of such individuals.
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants must demonstrate how they are working collaboratively with industry partners in the development and implementation of training, such as identifying skills gaps and ensuring that curriculum meets the needs of industry. • Partnerships may include providing internships/apprenticeships, curriculum design, advisory board participation, equipment donations, mentoring, job shadowing, guest speakers, and/or funding support. • Applicants may partner with new or existing industry collaborators to fulfil this requirement.
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount requested from MLSC by a single institution/organization cannot exceed \$750,000. However, applications submitted by multiple entities collaborating on a proposal can request up to \$750,000 per eligible institution/organization (costs must be identified separately). • Budget must include an itemized list of equipment, materials, supplies, and/or technology with the estimated cost for each item. Applicants must use the Excel template provided in the application. An “other costs” line item cannot be included. • Quotes are required for any single items costing over \$10,000. • The fiscal year for which each item will be purchased must be indicated.. • Budget should reflect total project implementation costs, identifying MLSC costs separately. • Reasonableness and validity of funding requested must be conveyed in the proposal. • MLSC reserves the right to adjust the requested amount.

6. Application and Review Process

6.1. Application Submission

Applications will only be accepted through the MLSC’s online application portal, accessed via the program webpage: www.masslifesciences.com/programs/workforcecapital. Applicants are required to create an account and complete a user profile before starting the application. It is recommended that applicants carefully follow the online instructions and provide complete, clear, and concise responses to all required questions. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure that its application is complete, meets minimum threshold requirements and is properly submitted to MLSC prior to the established deadline. Multiple users can be given access to the application. Applicants are asked to review the MLSC’s Public Disclosure policy (Section 7 below) prior to submitting their application.

6.2. Program Schedule

The solicitation process will proceed according to the schedule outlined below (target dates are subject to change). Applications cannot be submitted after the date and time specified.

Application Available:	December 11, 2023
Application Deadline:	March 15, 2024 at 5:00 P.M.
Awards Announced:	June 2024

7. General Request for Response Conditions

7.1. Notice of Public Disclosure

As a public entity, the MLSC is subject to Massachusetts' Public Records Law, codified at Chapter 66 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Thus, except for those documents exempted from disclosure, any documentary material, data, or other information received by the MLSC from an applicant is a public record subject to disclosure. Applicants are advised to review Chapter 66 prior to submitting any information to the MLSC.

Notwithstanding the above, certain kinds of information may be statutorily exempt from public disclosure under the limited exemption at Chapter 231, Section 3(I) of the Massachusetts General Laws. Specifically, materials that fall under one of the following categories may be determined to be not public records and thus not subject to disclosure:

- Information, documents, or data that consist of trade secrets,
- Information, documents, or data that consist of commercial or financial information regarding the operation of any business conducted by the applicant, and
- Information, documents, or data regarding the applicant's competitive position in a particular field of endeavor.

All confidentiality claims are subject to verification by the MLSC. If no confidentiality claim is made when information is received by the MLSC, then it may be made publicly available without further notice to you.

7.2. Contractual Requirements

MLSC intends to enter into an agreement with the selected applicant and reserves the right to amend the Agreement without further issuance of another solicitation.

7.3. Waiver Authority

MLSC reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive minor irregularities in submittal requirements, to request modifications of the application, to accept or reject any or all applications received, and/or to cancel all or part of this Solicitation at any time prior to awards.

7.4. Disclaimer

This Solicitation does not commit MLSC to award any funds, pay any costs incurred in preparing an application, or procure or contract for services or supplies. MLSC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received, negotiate with all qualified applicants, cancel or modify the Solicitation in part or in its entirety, or change the application guidelines, when it is in its best interest.