

December 2021 Network Matching Grant Awardees

- Branchfood: up to \$99,600
 - Branchfood aims to catalyze food innovation and unite food entrepreneurs, industry experts, corporate leaders, and more. Using this Network Matching Grant funding, Branchfood would launch a program in Rhode Island — partnering with the Cambridge Innovation Center and with support from Hope & Main — to assist small food businesses to innovate and grow in the ag-tech space, supporting the mission of advancing the local food industry.
- E for All: up to \$56,667
 - EforAll is a Massachusetts-based organization that focuses on accelerating economic and social impact through inclusive entrepreneurship. They host a business accelerator, organize pitch contests, run virtual workshops, and more. With this Network Matching Grant funding, EforAll will launch locally run teams to help aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners in Rhode Island launch and grow their businesses.
- Hope & Main (dba 222 Manton Coalition): up to \$248,000
 - The 222 Manton Coalition, with application officially submitted by member Hope & Main, aims to construct a trusted, local ecosystem for BIPOC and women-led businesses to guide their launch, development, and recovery. This grant funding would be used to equip minority entrepreneurs with the necessary tools to build sustainable, resilient, high growth businesses with positive impacts on their communities.
- Initiative for a Competitive Inner City: up to \$158,530
 - Initiative for a Competitive Inner City focuses on driving inclusive economic prosperity in under-resourced communities. Using the proposed Network Matching Grant funding, ICIC would partner with New Majority Capital as well as Polaris and the Community College of Rhode Island to provide Rhode Island small business owners who are approaching retirement with the information and resources necessary to successfully transition business ownership to new entrepreneurial business owners of color, supporting the growth of minority business ownership in state while also ensuring sustainability of successful local businesses.
- Innovation Studio: up to \$50,000
 - Innovation Studio helps to cultivate relationships and provide resources for anyone looking to successfully launch and grow a business. With the Network Matching Grant funding, the Innovation Studio Small Business Support Program provides tools, resources, and training to aid in business retention and growth through the implementation of technology and digital skills (e.g. through concierge services, workshops, and 1:1 consultations).
- New England Medical Innovation Center (NEMIC): up to \$100,000
 - NEMIC supports innovators and entrepreneurs to expedite the developmental process for ideas to realize commercial success and provide value to patients. They have twice before received Network Matching Grant funding. With this allocation, they would be able to reopen the Activate program, which provides professional services to startups to fill gaps in their business plan in preparation for a successful first round of fundraising.

- RI Black Business Association: up to \$150,108
 - The Rhode Island Black Business Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing business opportunities and vitality of Black-owned and minority businesses in the state. They have twice before received Network Matching Grant funding; this round would be used to continue to provide their suite of customized technical assistance and business services to BIPOC entrepreneurs and small businesses.
- RI Small Business Coalition: up to \$100,000
 - Formed in March 2020 and comprised of over 1,500 members, the Rhode Island Small Business Coalition advocates for and supports small businesses in the state. With this Network Matching Grant funding, RISBC would create the Small Business Assistance Portal — a hub to foster innovation through online collaboration and business technical assistance by connecting RI businesses to each other, government services, non-profit organizations, and the Coalition members themselves.
- United Way of Rhode Island: up to \$118,931
 - United Way of Rhode Island is a nonprofit with the mission to help those in need in the community. This grant would help in their build out of the RI Nonprofit Resource Center to support the operational needs of the 6,000+ nonprofit organizations in the state. This would include technical assistance and shared services supports for nonprofits in state.
- We Make RI: up to \$183,240
 - We Make RI is a training hub for unemployed and underemployed workers looking to start a new career in manufacturing. Using the proposed grant funding, We Make RI's Manufacturing Accelerator would design and facilitate a 36-month program to identify 8-12 micro-manufacturing businesses and bring them to long term viability.
- Visual Thrive, LLC: up to \$107,153
 - Visual Thrive is a local communications and marketing company that has launched the Shop Local Rhode Island database and online marketplace, through which RI small businesses can sell and ship their products and services—whether they have a separate e-commerce solution or not. This grant would support Visual Thrive/Shop Local Rhode Island in improving and adding capacity to their platform to allow easier and more comprehensive e-commerce options for RI small businesses as well as support for businesses to set themselves up on the e-commerce platform.